



**Rhode Island Foundation**  
New Funds Book



The generosity of countless Rhode Islanders has built the foundation we stand on. Because of them, we have state-wide reach and the financial strength to give progress a platform to leap. Every act of giving makes an impact. Collectively, they're a force that shapes our state.

We are grateful to our philanthropic partners who created new funds with us in 2025. In this book, you will find a variety of stories that capture the inspiration behind their generosity.

As Rhode Island's community foundation, we mobilize generosity and motivate change that makes a difference. Because separately, we can have impact; but **only together**, on a solid foundation, can we build the future we all hope for.

## 2025 New Funds

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2025  
New Fund Stories

# The Beagle Family Rebel Community Scholarship Fund



For Chris Beagle, philanthropy has always been personal. Growing up in South Kingstown, he was shaped by a father who spent more than three decades in university advancement and by a community that left a lasting mark on who he became. "I love Rhode Island to my soul," Chris shares.

After graduating from South Kingstown High School in 1998, Chris spent two decades on the West Coast, building a career in operations and logistics, earning a political science degree from the University of California, Santa Cruz, and starting a family. Along the way, he discovered a talent for inspiring others to give. As part of a leadership program at the university, he created a student philanthropy initiative called "Slug to Slug," rallying classmates to donate back to their university and exceeding every giving goal set before him. The experience stuck.

When Chris and his wife, Marisa, decided to return east and raise their three boys in Wakefield, he knew he wanted to invest in the community that

had meant so much to him growing up. The result is the Beagle Family Rebel Community Scholarship Fund – named for the South Kingstown High School Rebels – a permanently endowed fund established through the Rhode Island Foundation to support scholarships for Rebel students pursuing post-secondary education, whether that's a four-year university, a community college, or a trade program.

"Sometimes we think too big," explains Chris. "We're so concerned with what's happening on the other side of the planet, and that's important, but I fear we've veered away from what we can impact the most: our neighbors, the people close to us." The fund is designed to help students from families with fewer financial advantages, covering costs like tuition, books, laptops, or tools – whatever a young person needs to move forward.

Chris turned to the Rhode Island Foundation after speaking with South Kingstown High School's guidance counselors and found an immediate connection. "It was clear that the Foundation and I share the same values," he says. "How do we help Rhode Islanders? How do we help the local community?" Chris had a clear vision and a desire to help, but not necessarily a roadmap. That's where the Foundation partnership proved invaluable, offering the structure, experience, and shared commitment to local giving that turned his idea into something real and lasting.

Looking ahead, Chris hopes the fund will inspire fellow South Kingstown alumni to contribute and grow what he's started, helping the next class of Rebels access education and opportunities that will benefit them and the community they call home. He also hopes his sons will one day carry it forward. "I love that this is going to last long after I do," reflects Chris. "Learning to give back young is a big piece of why I'm doing this."

# Berkelhammer Family Fund for Basic Needs

## Mitzi Berkelhammer Perpetual Support Fund for Temple Beth-El

Mitzi Berkelhammer's roots in Rhode Island run deep, and so does her devotion to the family, faith, and community that have defined her life. After briefly living in Pittsburgh with her late husband Robert in the early years of their marriage, the couple returned to Rhode Island in 1977 and never looked back. Together, they raised three children, Jessi, Max, and Abby. For almost 50 years, Mitzi has devoted herself to the nonprofit community and Jewish communal life, serving in many leadership roles, including terms as chair of the board at both the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island and the Jewish Federation Foundation.

When Robert passed away six years ago, Mitzi resolved to honor the legacy of community involvement and generosity that she and Robert had built together. Rather than stepping back, she leaned forward, channeling their shared values into two permanent funds at the Rhode Island Foundation.

"I feel very lucky that I am able to create something lasting," she reflects. "I also think I am choosing the type of places and causes that my husband would feel good about."

The first, the Berkelhammer Family Fund for Basic Needs, will assist organizations providing food and shelter for vulnerable Rhode Islanders, causes Mitzi has championed for years. When uncertainty around federal food assistance programs made headlines, her commitment deepened. "I thought to myself, 'how can children not have the food they need?' I don't think you can get any more basic than a roof over your head and food in your stomach."

The second, the Mitzi Berkelhammer Perpetual Support Fund for Temple Beth-El, reflects a lifetime of connection to the historic Providence congregation where her uncle once served as rabbi, her parents and grandparents held membership, and where two of her granddaughters, fifth-generation congregants, now attend religious school. *L'dor v'dor*, 'from generation to generation,' this fund will grow over time, generating support for the Temple year after year, in perpetuity.

Mitzi's path to the Rhode Island Foundation came through her leadership at the Jewish Federation Foundation, which partners with the Foundation to manage its funds. She credits the Foundation's team for their patience, knowledge, and professionalism, as she sought to learn more about endowments. "They were not pestering me about when I was going to donate. I appreciated the respect I was given to work through what I wanted to do, in my own time. The team at the Foundation are 'professional professionals' – the best of the best."

For Mitzi, these two funds represent more than financial instruments. They are her promise that the values she and Robert built their lives around, honoring their faith and caring for those in need, will endure – *l'dor v'dor*.

## Kenneth B. Blumberg Memorial Fund

The Kenneth B. Blumberg Memorial Fund at the Rhode Island Foundation embodies one man's journey to overcome significant obstacles and his vision to create opportunities for others facing similar adversity. This fund offers financial support for educational pursuits to individuals with physical challenges, as well as to non-physically challenged individuals aged 40 and above.

Ken Blumberg, a proud lifelong Rhode Islander, was a kind, thoughtful, engaging, and determined man. Though he passed away just three weeks shy of his 76th birthday, Ken left behind an inspiring legacy.

"Ken was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis when he was ten years old," shared one of his close relatives. "Throughout his lifetime, he underwent 40 surgeries but never complained about his situation." Ken was affable and very private, yet he had a gift for connecting with people from all walks of life and was genuinely interested in others' stories. He was witty, perceptive, and incredibly knowledgeable about his diverse passions – history (particularly military history), the British monarchy, law and order, current events, politics, literature, and cinema. Ken's exceptional memory enabled him to effortlessly recall historical dates, personal stories, and movie scenes and dialogue, with remarkable detail.

Despite his health challenges, Ken's life became a testament to strength and resilience. He pursued his education with tenacity, graduating from Hope High School and Rhode Island Junior College, before receiving his desired journalism degree from Southern Illinois University, despite having to take a leave of absence for his first major surgery. Unable to find a journalism role post-graduation, Ken's varied career path began and included roles as Pawtucket's Bicentennial photographer, photography instructor, camp director, history teacher, and with work in the Rhode Island Attorney General's Criminal Division – each transition representing a challenge overcome and a new opportunity embraced.

"As someone who had to face these challenges himself, Ken understood how difficult it was to pivot professionally, and he had to do that many times," his cousin explained. "The inspiration for the fund was to assist others in surmounting barriers, particularly when retraining for new careers or making professional transitions later in life."

Ken chose the Rhode Island Foundation to steward his philanthropic vision based on its respected position in the community. Through estate planning, he created a lasting gift to benefit others.

"He wanted to help people who experience physical challenges because his health diagnosis defined his life and his outlook," reflected his relatives. Ken's understanding of these challenges will now create pathways for others to achieve educational and professional growth.

## Butler and Associates HR Scholarship Fund



Cynthia "Cindy" Butler has spent more than 30 years championing a simple but powerful belief: that organizations flourish when their people do. Now, through the Butler and Associates HR Scholarship Fund at the Rhode Island Foundation, she is passing that conviction on to the next generation of HR professionals.

Cindy came to human resources the way many of the best practitioners do – through lived experience. She left college early, found herself working in operations, and watched firsthand as inadequate employee practices drove turnover and disengagement. Determined to be part of the solution, Cindy enrolled in a labor relations course at Cornell University, a turning point that set her career in motion. She eventually relocated to Rhode Island for a field HR role, then joined Stride Rite Corporation, where a culture of genuine employee investment showed her what HR excellence could look like. The experience was formative. "If you treat your employees right and do the right things, it will help your business," she says. "It's very simple, but a lot of organizations don't do that."

After earning her business degree at Bryant University, and subsequently, her HR, training, and small business consulting certifications, Cindy founded Butler and Associates Human Resources Consulting in Jamestown. Over three decades, she has hired and mentored countless HR professionals, served on numerous boards, and led the Rhode Island Society for Human Resource Management's state chapter. Today, she works primarily with nonprofits, helping them build strong, capable teams from the inside out.

It was through that nonprofit work that Cindy's relationship with the Rhode Island Foundation deepened. She collaborated with Foundation staff on team-building initiatives and participated in its Capacity Building programs, getting to know not just the organization's sterling reputation, but the people behind it. "It's a special group of people," she says, "and I have a lot of trust in the organization." That trust, combined with her admiration for Bryant University and the strength of its HR programs, made establishing a scholarship fund feel like a natural next step.

The Butler and Associates HR Scholarship Fund supports Bryant University students pursuing careers in human resource management – a deeply personal investment from someone who has spent a lifetime advancing the profession. "Artificial Intelligence might be capable of taking on some administrative tasks," she reflects, "but we will still need people to foster inclusive cultures, develop talent and capable leaders, and drive organizational success."

# Caskey Family Fund



Jill and Bill Caskey both arrived in Rhode Island in 1981 as college students. She, from Cape Cod, and he, from Oklahoma City, with a sense, he jokes, that he may have been a Rhode Islander in a past life. Although they lived in the same state, they wouldn't find each other until a few years after graduation. They married, spent seven years in Atlanta, and ultimately returned to the place they loved. Over forty years later, Rhode Island is unambiguously home.

That deep sense of belonging is at the heart of the Caskey Family Fund, a new unrestricted fund at the Rhode Island Foundation – one of the most flexible and meaningful forms of philanthropic giving.

The Caskeys have been giving to the Foundation for a decade, including to its Civic Leadership Fund, a current use fund supporting advocacy, civic engagement, convening, and research. Over time, as the Foundation communicated how the Caskeys' gifts were specifically being used, it deepened their trust and broadened their thinking. "We thought about leaving money to individual institutions," Jill explains, "but organizations come and go. Having one place that

adapts to changing needs felt like a positive move." Instead of waiting to establish a fund through their estate, they decided to give meaningfully now, during their lifetimes.

For Bill, unrestricted giving carries a particular logic. "It might sometimes feel less glamorous," he acknowledges. "You're giving a little to the engine of the car. Everything that keeps an organization going – unrestricted giving helps with that." He also values the Foundation's rigorous grantmaking that aligns closely with the Caskeys' philanthropic interests. "When the Foundation grants to an organization, the research and legwork have been done appropriately. It feels good to know the oversight has been done."

Education, food security, and climate health all matter to the Caskeys, and all are priorities the Foundation addresses. But what drew them to unrestricted giving was also something larger: confidence that the Foundation would direct resources where they were most needed, even toward organizations they'd never heard of, expanding their generosity beyond the familiar. "Names pop up as places that have been funded and I think – what a cool thing that's happening," Jill shares. "It keeps our giving from being limited to just what we know."

The experience of opening the fund was, in their words, smooth, transparent, and well-guided. And the fund itself is designed to endure – open to contributions from family and friends, a thread connecting the Caskeys to Rhode Island well into the future.

"The Rhode Island Foundation will be around long after we are," says Bill. "This fund represents a profound connection to the state we love, and that felt like a very good reason to make it part of our story."

# Child and Family Services of Newport County Endowment Fund

In 1866, Ellen Townsend of Newport refused to look away from the children she saw begging in the city's streets. In response, she convinced her brother, Christopher, to donate their family home, along with \$500 for repairs, to establish the Home for Friendless Children – a safe haven where vulnerable children could receive care and support. That founding act of compassion has endured for nearly 160 years, evolving into Child and Family Services of Newport County, an organization dedicated to supporting children, families, and elders throughout Rhode Island.

Today, Child and Family operates community engagement centers in both Providence and Middletown, providing comprehensive services that include matching children with foster families, an early learning center serving 150 children annually, family preservation programs including treatment and therapy, supportive housing for families, and Aging Well programs that help elders remain in their own homes.

"Child and Family is a human services organization with a wide breadth of programming," explains Jess Kennedy, who served as Board Chair when the organization established its endowment at the Rhode Island Foundation. "Our programs focus on care for community members from birth through an Aging Well process for the elderly." Current Board Chair Patricia Holliday shares that vision, describing

Child and Family as an organization that supports community members across every stage of life – a continuum she believes is rare among human services organizations.

While many associate Child and Family with Newport County, Kennedy emphasizes the organization's reach across the state. "We have a big presence in Newport County, but we also have a statewide presence, with a big presence in Providence as well. We are dedicated to helping the Rhode Island community."

Child and Family has maintained an endowment since its founding, and in 2025, a competitive review process brought it to the Rhode Island Foundation. "It was the very clear choice," Kennedy notes. "We're both Rhode Island institutions serving the common good. We wanted to work with an organization that speaks our language, that understands what we do, and what's important."

For Susan Jacobsen, who joined Child and Family as President and CEO in 2025, philanthropic partnerships are part of the organization's DNA. "Philanthropy has played a key role throughout our history – allowing us to make very big pivots in moments when we knew that was the right thing to do. In choosing the Foundation as the home for our endowment, we knew we were aligning with an organization that shares our commitment to Rhode Island's children and communities. That mattered a great deal."

"Growing the endowment is really important to the board, to our new leadership, and to the organization," Kennedy shares. "I think Child and Family will be really well positioned for the future with the Rhode Island Foundation, well beyond my tenure on the board."



# College Visions Endowment Fund

For over two decades, College Visions has been transforming lives by empowering first-generation students from underserved communities to achieve the promise of higher education. Now, with a new endowment fund at the Rhode Island Foundation, the organization is building long-term sustainability for both its mission and continued growth.

"When I came on board in 2022, one of my first thoughts was endowment," says Lamont Gordon, Executive Director of College Visions. "We're over 20 years old, we've matured and grown, and it's time to start thinking not just about today, but the future. An endowment solidifies our commitment to expanding access for years to come."

Lamont, a first-generation college graduate himself, knows firsthand how transformative higher education can be. That personal connection drives his work at College Visions, where the approach differs from many college access organizations. "Others often focus on 'high achieving' students as defined by test scores, but we believe that any student who wants to go to college should be supported," he explains. "We meet students where they are and help them find the right fit. Some go to community college, others to highly selective schools, and everywhere in between."



The organization's impact is substantial: over 1,000 students have participated in the program, with close to 600 alumni who have graduated from college. Currently serving approximately 550 students annually across 12 Rhode Island cities, College Visions guides participants from college admission through graduation – and now, through their new strategic plan, the college-to-career transition.

"Graduating from college is an amazing accomplishment for first-gen students, but it's not the ending," Lamont notes. "Our longer-term vision is that students will graduate, build careers, and become the next generation of leaders in our state."

The endowment is a cornerstone of College Visions' strategic plan to strengthen their financial foundation while expanding services. The organization is also developing a planned giving program and exploring ways to serve additional communities throughout Rhode Island.

The Rhode Island Foundation has been instrumental in College Visions' evolution, also providing grant funding and professional development opportunities. "When people think about the Foundation, they might think about it as a place that gives out money," Lamont reflects, "but it really is having an impact in multiple ways, supporting the continued growth of organizations like us."

# Issac (Ike) J. Coney Memorial Scholarship Fund



When Rodney Burkett thinks about his late husband, Ike, he remembers his eyes – kind, gentle, and welcoming, a window into the generous spirit that defined Ike's life. "He had an empathy for people that was really remarkable," Rodney reflects. "He was always looking out for others."

Ike Coney grew up near the ocean in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, where he would often visit the beach before work just to watch the sun rise over the water. He navigated segregated schools as a child, served in the U.S. Army, and built a successful career in banking – carrying with him, always, an instinct for making people feel seen. A natural connector, Ike could sense when someone was having a hard day and offer just the right words or moment of levity to lift their spirits.

Ike and Rodney spent nearly three decades living in Indiana, where Rodney cared for his aging parents, before the prospect of a fresh start brought them to explore New England. Rhode Island, it turned

out, would become the place where Ike felt most at home. When visiting Providence, Ike wandered into a downtown coffee shop and, for once, simply blended in – no stares, no sense of being made to feel different. "He felt welcome," Rodney shares. That quiet moment of belonging stayed with Ike, and after Rodney was offered a job at the Community Libraries of Providence, the two settled in Rhode Island for good.

Ike was just 66 when he passed away unexpectedly in September 2024. In the months that followed, Rodney found himself searching for a way to carry forward what Ike had meant to him and to the world. "After Ike passed – such a loving and giving person – I needed to carry on that idea of giving," he says.

To honor Ike's love of the ocean and his devotion to helping others, Rodney established the Isaac (Ike) J. Coney Memorial Scholarship Fund at the Rhode Island Foundation to support Rhode Island residents pursuing studies in marine life sciences, oceanography, or medical sciences at the University of Rhode Island, with a focus on improving the health and well-being of ocean ecosystems and people alike.

Rodney had long understood the power of philanthropy, having supported his own alma mater, Ball State University, for many years. When he looked to honor Ike, the Rhode Island Foundation offered the flexibility and personal attention he needed. "It's a wonderful opportunity for me to be fulfilled," he says, "to be able to do something like this."

# Michael Leo Denny Speaker Series Fund



Michael Leo Denny's story began in Pawtucket. It was there, among the stacks of the Deborah Cook Sayles Public Library and the shelves of The Little Acorn Bookshop, that a young boy from a working-class Irish family discovered the power of the written word, and began a journey that would transform American publishing.

Born in 1943, Michael became a voracious reader early on. "He read a book or two a week," his younger brother Joe recalls. Michael also became aware that he was gay when he was very young, something not easily articulated or accepted at that time, and his hometown library and bookstore soon became sanctuaries – places where books revealed new worlds of thought and possibility.

After graduating from Tolman High School a year early, his intellectual curiosity carried Michael to the University of Chicago, where he earned

undergraduate and graduate degrees, and was mentored by renowned social philosopher Hannah Arendt, with whom he would later develop a treasured friendship. In the early 1970s, he moved to New York City, launching a fifty-year groundbreaking publishing career. Michael went on to become the first openly gay editor at a major publishing house at a time when being gay was legal grounds for termination.

Undeterred, he worked with an astonishing array of writers including Ntozake Shange, Judith Thurman, Edmund White, R. Buckminster Fuller, G. Gordon Liddy, Mr. T, Larry Kramer, Robert Mapplethorpe, and Randy Shilts, co-founded *Christopher Street* magazine, and established Stonewall Inn Editions at St. Martin's Press in 1987, the first LGBTQ+ imprint at a leading publisher. Michael also authored three books, including his final work, *On Christopher Street: Life, Sex and Death After Stonewall*, a collection of writings and essays published by the University of Chicago Press just weeks before his death, a memoir that chronicled the voices of AIDS pioneers, many lost to the epidemic.

Before his death at the age of eighty, Michael often spoke about his desire to give back to the library where he had spent so much time as a young person – a place committed to providing an inclusive, safe learning environment for its patrons. After Michael's passing in 2023, Joe was determined to ensure his brother's wishes were realized.

When Joe approached library staff about establishing a speaker series in Michael's memory, they connected him with the Rhode Island Foundation. With the Foundation's assistance and expertise, Joe established a designated fund that will provide ongoing support for programming at the Deborah Cook Sayles Public Library, aligned with Michael's values. "It's been seamless working with the Foundation," reflects Joe. "I couldn't ask for a smoother, easier way to accomplish our goals."

The Michael Leo Denny Speaker Series Fund will provide for programming that honors Michael's commitment to education and freedom of expression, while sustaining the library's role as a place of discovery and possibility – just as it inspired a young Pawtucket reader decades ago.

# Dettore and Angelo Scholarship Fund

Christopher Angelo was the kind of person everyone felt privileged to know. Outgoing and funny, he loved to talk about everything from his passion for the New York Yankees and Green Bay Packers to his love of Italian food. "One day he looked at his Uncle Ray and said, 'What would we do if there was no Italian food to eat?'" recalls his father Donald with a smile. Christopher, who held a black belt in martial arts, had enlisted in the Air National Guard and was excited to serve his country.

When Christopher died unexpectedly in 2003 at age 22, his parents Deborah and Donald Angelo, along with his younger brother Jeff, wanted to create something meaningful in his memory. They established a scholarship through the Sons and Daughters of Italy in America Grand Lodge of Rhode Island to help children of members pursue higher education. "We received so many donations," Deborah remembers. "It was our way of honoring who Chris was."

The scholarship took on additional meaning in 2012 when it was renamed the Dettore and Angelo Scholarship in remembrance of Deborah's brother, Raymond Dettore, after his passing. Despite being legally blind with only peripheral vision, Ray built a remarkable legal career, passing the bar exam on

his first attempt, and practicing privately for many years. He later served as Chairman of the Board of Licenses and then Deputy City Solicitor for the City of Providence. Ray was also National Historian and National Orator for the Sons and Daughters of Italy in America. He was active in many civic organizations, dedicating himself to helping others, particularly those with visual impairments.

For nearly two decades, the family personally managed the scholarship. Then Jeff discovered the Rhode Island Foundation. "I always knew the organization existed, but I started looking into it and found out that the Foundation helps people support the causes they care about for the long term – and that's a pretty good thing," he says.

By establishing their fund as a designated endowment with the Foundation, the family has ensured Christopher and Raymond's legacy will live on. "When we're gone, we know it will continue, and we don't have to leave the work of taking care of it to Jeff," says Deborah. "It will be invested through the endowment, so it will grow and other people can contribute, and it will still be here, well beyond our lifetimes."



# Dowben Family Fund



When Carla Dowben passed away in January 2024 at age 91, she left behind more than memories – she left a lasting commitment to help others. A trailblazer who graduated from the University of Chicago before becoming the only female in her Temple University Law School class of 1955, Carla spent her career fighting for those without a voice: women, individuals with mental and physical challenges, and marginalized communities. From helping to write Massachusetts patient rights codes to her work in health law and compliance, she was a determined advocate for civil liberties and access to care for all.

After retiring to Rhode Island in the early 1990s, Carla and her late husband Robert, a Brown University professor, found a community that resonated with their values. “Rhode Island is a very welcoming state in many ways, and they felt a kinship,” her daughter Susan explains. For over 25 years, Carla was deeply involved in Rhode Island life, from the Women of Brown to the Providence Pension Board, developing what Susan describes as “a huge coterie of wonderful friends.” A lover of

flowers and nature, Carla transformed her front yard into a flourishing garden that drew RISD watercolor students to paint what Carla dubbed her “Little Monet.”

True to her longstanding belief that “charity begins at home,” Carla focused her philanthropy on her own backyard. She supported the Rhode Island Community Food Bank, the Good Neighbor Fund, local public television, education in all forms, and in her later years, refugee and immigrant communities. During his lifetime, Robert was supportive of his wife’s philanthropic endeavors, and following his passing in 2019, Carla established a trust to create a donor advised fund at the Rhode Island Foundation – the Dowben Family Fund – with her children Susan and Jonathan as advisors.

“She always fought for the underdog,” Susan recalls. “She always had a desire to help those who did not have a voice or a platform from which to speak. This was the opportunity to do more – to give enough for organizations to do something meaningful.”

The Rhode Island Foundation’s mission aligned perfectly with Carla’s commitment to helping those most in need. Notes Jonathan, “The Foundation is very good at vetting the groups it works with,” echoing his parents’ longtime concern that assistance reaches those who need it.

Through the Dowben Family Fund, Susan and Jonathan continue their mother’s work in the community she loved, supporting education, healthcare, basic human needs, and civil liberties, and ensuring the voices she spent a lifetime championing continue to be heard.

# Feline Welfare Fund of PAAWS RI



Dr. Annette Rauch wasn’t always a veterinarian. She started her career as a nurse, working in a neonatal intensive care unit with sick and premature babies. But throughout her nursing career, one thought kept returning: she wanted to work with animals.

After graduating from Tufts Veterinary School, Dr. Rauch purchased a modest building on Post Road in Warwick and built Care for Animals – a practice unlike most others in Rhode Island. It focused on helping pet owners who couldn’t afford traditional veterinary care – a need which remains largely unmet in the state. She pioneered a treatment approach that recognized that some care is better than no care at all, offering options that fit within families’ budgets rather than turning animals away. Long before this became a recognized concept in veterinary medicine called “spectrum of care,” she was filling a critical gap in the animal welfare system, helping thousands of animals get the treatment they needed.

In 2011, Dr. Rauch established PAAWS RI, a 501(c)3 nonprofit dedicated to expanding the Care for Animals’ mission. Backed by a working board, the organization opened an animal shelter including adoption services, collaborated extensively with other animal welfare groups, and provided care for all types of animals, including community cats – those living in backyards or on porches, sustained by people who fed them but couldn’t necessarily afford veterinary services.

During that period, Dr. Rauch also served on the board of the Ocean State Animal Coalition and worked closely with organizations like PawsWatch, Friends of Animals in Need, and Cat Adoption Team Services – providing readily available spay and neuter services when capacity was scarce.

As retirement approached, Dr. Rauch faced a choice. She, and fellow PAAWS RI board members Gilbert Fletcher and Patricia O’Donnell asked themselves: do we simply distribute remaining funds and close, or do we continue supporting the mission we’ve worked on for years?

The answer led them to the Rhode Island Foundation and the creation of the Feline Welfare Fund of PAAWS RI. Through this donor-advised fund, annual grants can be made to other Rhode Island nonprofits working to improve feline welfare, ensuring the PAAWS RI mission continues.

Having worked with the Foundation for years as a grant recipient, Dr. Rauch knew it would be the right partner. She appreciated its commitment to sustainable solutions and thorough approach. Prior to establishing the fund, Foundation staff met with her and the PAAWS RI board, answered questions, and explained the financial mechanisms to ensure the fund would support animal welfare organizations for years to come.

“While I will no longer be providing direct care to animals in my retirement,” Dr. Rauch reflects, “PAAWS RI will continue to support others in our community that share our mission. That’s very exciting and hopeful.”

# Theresa and Raffaella Gaccione Women in Healthcare Scholarship Fund



Dr. Daniel R. Gaccione considers himself to be somewhat of a family and community historian, committed to preserving stories deeply rooted in Westerly's Italian American heritage. This newly established scholarship fund honors two remarkable women at the heart of those stories. The examples of strength and caregiving demonstrated by his great-grandmother Theresa and grandmother Raffaella fueled a personal desire to support other women in their quest to study and receive degrees in the health sciences.

Theresa and her husband Vincenzo arrived from Acri, a small town in the region of Calabria, Italy, in the early 1900s with \$3500 and a vision for their future. The couple purchased nearly 200 acres near the Pawcatuck River in Westerly, eventually parceling the land out to their children and grandchildren in order to create a neighborhood where everyone looked out for each other. Dr. Gaccione recalled with affection that "as a kid, it seemed like whenever I went outside, there would be ten people yelling out of windows from different houses telling me to put a coat on!"

The same care Theresa showed her family also extended throughout the community. Without formal education beyond the second grade, she became the self-appointed midwife for the entire neighborhood, delivering babies well into her seventies. Eventually a group of local physicians told the 78-year-old that she would need medical school credentials to continue performing these services. "She was the inspiration for establishing the scholarship," Gaccione explains, "as Theresa, like many women of her era, did not have the resources to attend college or medical school."

Dr. Gaccione's "Nani" Raffaella, whose name translates to "God heals," carried forward the family tradition of caregiving. A vibrant personality who spoke almost no English, she welcomed her young grandson for Friday night sleepovers that included big Italian breakfasts, always making sure that everyone was well fed. Her warmth and devotion to family exemplified the same nurturing spirit that defined her mother-in-law Theresa's life.

The newly endowed Theresa and Raffaella Women in Healthcare Scholarship Fund supports scholarships for Westerly High School (WHS) graduating seniors attending an accredited institution of higher education and planning a career in healthcare, with a preference for female students.

"There are so many capable young women out there who have an interest in patient care," says Dr. Gaccione, a Providence College and Brown University Medical School educated physician. "I want to lend some assistance with the hope that finances alone will not prevent these WHS graduates from pursuing a degree in the health sciences."

Dr. Gaccione first learned of the Foundation through a fund established by family members to honor the memory of his cousin, Krista Martin. Appreciating the Foundation's professionalism and streamlined process, he knew it was the right place to ensure that the legacy of his grandmothers lives on. "The ease of working with the Foundation and their ability to handle all aspects of the administration of the scholarship were important to me," he notes. "Simply stated, the Foundation does great work helping Rhode Islanders memorialize the people they love."

# Rhonda Beth Goldstein Creativity Award



Rhonda Beth Goldstein was only 19 years old when she passed away suddenly after a brief illness, but her creative spirit continues to inspire and support young artists nearly four decades later. A 1982 graduate of Cranston High School East, Rhonda was a painter, poet, dancer, and singer who performed in school dramas and musicals, sang in the a cappella choir, and served as an arts and crafts counselor at Camp Jori. She earned Scholastic Arts Gold Key recognition and was a trustee scholar at New York University.

"She was the most talented one in our family," recalls her brother Neal, one of Rhonda's five siblings. "She was a gifted artist, with deep feelings about so much. She had very strong convictions. Her loss devastated all of us."

Following Rhonda's passing, the Goldstein family established a scholarship in her memory at Cranston High School East to support graduating seniors pursuing accredited post-secondary education in the fine and creative arts. What began in 1986 as a single \$200 award has grown over the years into multiple

\$500 scholarships, honoring Rhonda's love of the arts and wide-ranging talents.

Now, with the family spread across the country – from Oregon to Connecticut to California – the Goldsteins, together with the Cranston School Department, have partnered with the Rhode Island Foundation to ensure Rhonda's legacy continues in perpetuity.

"We first heard about the Foundation from Kevin Murrough at the Cranston School Department," explains Rhonda's brother, Stu. "We basically had the money in lower interest bank accounts, and now it will be professionally looked after."

"The Goldstein family's dedication to honoring Rhonda's memory has been an inspiration to our entire school community for nearly four decades," shares Kevin. "The Cranston School Department has been proud to steward this scholarship and support the talented young artists at Cranston High School East who carry on her creative legacy. Partnering with the Rhode Island Foundation was a natural next step. It ensures that Rhonda's name and her family's generosity will continue to lift aspiring artists in our community for as long as there are students with a passion for the arts."

For the Goldstein family, the partnership has freed them to focus on sharing more about Rhonda's life and artistic talents. Working with the Foundation has given the entire family an opportunity to become involved in new ways, like assembling and photographing her artwork to create an exhibit for the annual scholarship awards ceremony at Cranston High School East.

"Without the Rhode Island Foundation, I don't think we would have been motivated to do this," Stu reflects. "Our family does not have to worry about the administration of the scholarship, and we can now be involved at a higher level."

"One thing I've learned over the last several decades is that artists don't get a lot of kudos," Stu adds. "What's unique about this scholarship is that it gives young artists a chance to take pride in and pursue their creative work. As we all face our mortality, we want to make sure this continues in Rhonda's name. The Rhode Island Foundation is a way to do that."

## Janet Howland and Jay Gorud Legacy Fund



For Janet Howland and her husband Jay Gorud, giving has always been a family affair. Janet grew up in a family where generosity was part of life – her parents regularly gave their time and money to causes they believed in, and their example shaped her deeply.

Janet's father, Allen, served on numerous boards well into his retirement, sometimes flying back to Rhode Island from his winter home in Florida just to attend a meeting. Her mother, Kay, was equally devoted, volunteering and serving on many boards. "It wasn't just a commitment of money," Janet recalls, "but a commitment of time, passion, and care for other people."

When Janet moved to California in 1976 – on a whim, she laughs – she carried that spirit with her. She built a career, a marriage, and a life in the Bay Area, all while volunteering with nonprofits and supporting causes close to her community. When her father passed, her mother created

four individual donor-advised funds at the Rhode Island Foundation for Janet and her three siblings, deepening both the family's philanthropic legacy and their relationship with the Foundation.

Now, Janet and Jay have established their own legacy fund at the Rhode Island Foundation – a designated fund that directs support to two organizations in California doing vital work: the Chronicle Season of Sharing Fund, which helps community members with emergency assistance for rent and healthcare, and The Alameda County Community Food Bank, addressing the persistent and pressing challenge of food insecurity. Both organizations reflect a conviction that Janet and Jay hold deeply – the need for food, shelter, and basic human dignity is real, urgent, and universal.

When Janet and Jay began taking required minimum distributions from their retirement accounts, they wanted a thoughtful, lasting way to direct those resources, one that didn't require them to manage investments or conduct endless due diligence on their own. With the Rhode Island Foundation already a trusted partner in their philanthropic journey, the decision to establish a legacy fund there was an easy one. The Foundation's flexibility meant that Janet and Jay could support the organizations they cared about in California without restriction, while their investment continued to grow and contribute to the Foundation's broader endowment that supports Rhode Island communities.

"It took a weight off my mind," she says of working with the Foundation to designate their granting to organizations she and Jay trust, knowing that support will flow to these nonprofits for years to come. Janet and Jay also plan to one day pass their donor-advised fund, along with the values behind it, to their son, continuing their legacy of generosity. As Janet notes, the most fundamental human needs don't disappear. And in this family, neither does their commitment to help.

## Jane Hoyle and Joanne McGlynn Memorial Scholarship Fund



Jane Hoyle and Joanne McGlynn, sisters who grew up in Tiverton, left behind a legacy of compassion, grace, and care felt by all who knew them. Both were devoted to helping others, Jane as a nurse, and Joanne as a teacher. When Jane's daughter, Hannah, began thinking about how to best honor the memories of these two extraordinary women, a scholarship felt like a meaningful way to commemorate their vibrant spirit of service and giving.

The newly created Jane Hoyle and Joanne McGlynn Memorial Scholarship Fund now supports two scholarships for graduating seniors from Tiverton High School, one for students majoring in K-12 education and the other for students majoring in nursing – paying tribute to remarkable careers, while paving the way for Jane and Joanne's work to continue.

Jane Hoyle spent nearly four decades as a nurse at St. Anne's Hospital, becoming the first recipient of the prestigious Nurse of Distinction award in 2008 and eventually serving as Clinical Leader in the Intensive Care Unit. "She never stopped caring or being a nurse," Hannah says of her mom. "That was her passion and her life. She would always go the extra mile for her patients and the nurses she managed and was the most comforting presence.

She could bring humor and light to any situation. It would make us all feel better."

Joanne McGlynn became a legendary English teacher at Concord High School in New Hampshire for over 20 years. As adviser to the Presidential Candidates Club, she transformed the school into a must-visit destination for candidates during election cycles, making national news as she hosted numerous presidential hopefuls. Even after retiring to Tiverton, Joanne volunteered, teaching ESL to children at the border and tutoring adults closer to home. Joanne also brought the same boundless energy to her role as an aunt. "She would spend countless hours with her nieces off on adventures. She never stopped educating, caring, and wanting the best for everyone," says her niece Faith Parisi, now a guidance counselor at Tiverton High School.

Faith helped Hannah navigate the process of establishing the fund. "We weren't sure where to go and how it all worked," Faith recalls. With help from Tiverton High's guidance department chair, along with family, Hannah and Faith found their way to the Rhode Island Foundation, bringing their vision to life and ensuring the scholarship would support Tiverton students for many years to come.

"They were just so successful and impactful in their careers," Hannah reflects. "My mom and my aunt were the best of the best at what they did. We wanted their legacy to live on and help inspire the next generation of nurses and teachers to follow in their footsteps."



# Hudon-Hartman Pawtuxet Preservation Trust



Janet Hudon-Hartman knows every creak in the floors of her 250-year-old Fair Street home – knowledge earned through a lifetime of watching her father bring it back to life, one room at a time, holding boards steady as a girl, before she ultimately became its guardian. Now, she's working to ensure other historic treasures in Pawtuxet Village will be preserved and protected.

Through the Hudon-Hartman Pawtuxet Preservation Trust at the Rhode Island Foundation, Janet is creating a permanent resource to support historic preservation throughout Pawtuxet Village's National Historic District, which encompasses sections of Warwick and Cranston. The field of interest fund will provide critical support for preservation projects – from architectural assistance to window restoration to storefront rehabilitation – helping property owners protect the structures

that tell the story of Rhode Island's colonial heritage and Revolutionary past.

"We don't have enough 1700s houses left in this country; somebody has to worry about that," explains Janet, a founding member of the Pawtuxet Village Association (PVA) for over 50 years. "There's nowhere for the average person to get help with funding for preservation."

Her fund will support the kind of vital work she's witnessed firsthand through the PVA. The volunteer-run nonprofit, incorporated in 1976, serves as the eyes on the ground for the National Historic District. The organization works to protect historic structures from demolition, advocates for appropriate development, and encourages proper management of period architecture. On the Cranston side of Pawtuxet, which lacks local historic district protections, the PVA has been crucial in preventing federal funds from being used in ways that would destroy the character of the historic area.

Pawtuxet Village holds extraordinary historical significance as the site where colonists burned the HMS Gaspee in 1772 – the first overt action of the American Revolution. Today, the village's remarkable collection of colonial and Victorian-era homes spans nearly three centuries of American history. Yet preservation is costly, and even property owners with means are often surprised by the expense of proper restoration.

Janet is fundraising during her lifetime to build the fund's impact. Eventually, the Fair Street house itself will be gifted to the Foundation, with proceeds from its sale flowing directly into the fund – transforming her family's legacy into lasting support for this work and ensuring the past continues creating opportunities for the future. As her daughter Susan, who serves alongside her mother on the PVA board, observes, "My mom seeks to continue breathing life into these older homes. Through her support, in conjunction with our community organizations and the residents of Pawtuxet, we hope to maintain our history for future generations."

# G. Alan Kurose, M.D. Healthcare Impact Fund

No matter the challenge before him, Dr. George Alan Kurose returned to the same question every time: "What's best for the patient?" For Al, as he was known to those close to him, this was never a platitude; it was a discipline. He practiced it daily, first as an internal medicine physician in East Providence and later, as a nationally recognized healthcare leader.

Al passed away on October 30, 2025, at the age of 64, after a battle with pancreatic cancer that he faced with characteristic grace. His career spanned private practice, the presidency of Coastal Medical, where he helped build one of the country's best-performing Accountable Care Organizations, and senior leadership roles at Lifespan and Nuance Health. He testified before the U.S. Senate on value-based care. Yet those who knew him best say he never spoke in terms of "I." It was always "we."

"He brought the right people into the room and gave them all equal footing," recalls his wife, Sharon. "He never thought he had all the answers. His ability to bring people together and make them feel comfortable sharing their knowledge, always working toward what's best for the patient – that was the secret of his success."

Sharon established the G. Alan Kurose, M.D. Healthcare Impact Fund at the Rhode Island Foundation to honor the two causes closest to his heart. "It combines the two things he was most

passionate about, other than his family," she explains, "improving healthcare for Rhode Islanders and the work of the Rhode Island Foundation." Al served the Foundation as both board member and board chair from 2017 through 2025.

This innovative fund will support an annual award and the Foundation's grantmaking in healthcare. Each year, the G. Alan Kurose, M.D. Healthcare Impact Award will recognize an individual, team, or organization advancing patient outcomes while improving quality and reducing cost. Alongside the award, the fund will expand the Foundation's discretionary grantmaking in healthcare, with a priority toward primary care, reflecting Al's belief that better care and lower costs are not opposing forces, but rather two sides of the same commitment to patients.

Al's daughter, Megan, sees the award as an important reminder of her father's ability to hold both the sweeping and the personal in view at once. "He always had a larger view in his mind, but he worked from the ground up. It always came down to the individual and how their care could be improved. Those years of taking care of patients were the great basis for his work as a healthcare policy reform leader."

For Sharon, the fund carries a deeper purpose still. "When you die at 64, there are grandchildren you haven't met yet. A fund like this is a legacy – it's a way that future generations of the Kurose family, as well as those who cared about Al, can come to know him and support the work he valued."

The Foundation is honored to steward this fund and to carry forward Al's legacy and vision for a healthier Rhode Island.



# Marea E. Lewis Fund

Newport, Rhode Island, was Marea Elena Lewis's world, and she knew it like few others did. Her family's roots were firmly planted, stretching back to her grandparents, who emigrated from Greece in the late 1800's and made Newport their home. Born in 1949, she grew up steeped in her community, its history, and its people, becoming, as those who knew her recall, a comprehensive source of knowledge about all things Newport. She volunteered at St. Spyridon Greek Orthodox Church, brought food to homebound seniors, and quietly saved her money across a handful of small local bank accounts, never drawing attention to herself or what she was building.

Her love of Newport ran deep, and nowhere more so than in her care for its children.

Marea devoted her career to the city's public elementary school, working as both a teacher and guidance counselor. She earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in education from the University of Rhode Island – a reflection of a woman who never stopped learning and who believed in the power of education. Marea taught every elementary level with equal enthusiasm. When asked which grade was her favorite, she smiled and said simply, "All of them."

Her own love of learning was expansive. She immersed herself in language, travel, and the arts, always driven by genuine intellectual curiosity. It was that same spirit of curiosity and discovery that she worked to cultivate in her students. As her cousin and executor Charlie Zoulias recalls, "She loved kids and loved helping them progress – all through a sense of joy about excelling and learning." She believed that education didn't stop at the classroom door, and that children deserved experiences that could expand their sense of the world around them.

More than 25 years ago, Marea began laying the groundwork for a fund that would provide enriching outside-the-classroom learning opportunities through field trips for Newport's public elementary school children. Her estate planner guided her to the Rhode Island Foundation as the right home for the fund, and through a bequest following her passing at the age of 75, her vision became a reality in the form of the Marea E. Lewis Fund.

"I think it's a heck of a prize," shares Charlie. "When she made the decision to do this, she had no concept of the impact that she would make for the school children in Newport. If it helps those kids, she'd be happy."



# Charles and Jeanne Liguori Memorial Scholarship Fund

It was a rainy day at Misquamicut Beach when Charles Liguori and his future wife, Jeanne, first met under an awning, sheltering from a storm. Three days later, Charles shipped off to Korea. Though they barely knew each other, the couple nurtured their connection, faithfully exchanging letters, and when Charles returned home to Westerly, they married – beginning a love story that would span 68 years.

Charles, who built a career in banking and real estate, later discovered a passion for impressionist painting, capturing coastal New England landscapes, Italian street markets, and simple moments of everyday life. His work reflected his deep connection to the people and places he loved most. Jeanne, the beloved "Miss Jeanne" who taught generations of children at Jeanne's Dance Center in Westerly, shared Charles's love for creativity, family, and community. When Charles passed away on his 92nd birthday in December 2024, followed by Jeanne just six months later, their children came together to honor their parents' creative legacy.

"My dad had probably close to 700 paintings," recalls their daughter, Lisa, "but he never displayed more than four or five at a time." After sorting and keeping family favorites, Lisa and her husband Chris, together with her brothers David, Michael, and Steven,

organized an art show to sell their dad's remaining works. "We didn't realize how much money we were going to raise. We thought we might raise enough for a small donation to the United Theater and to help kids at Westerly High School with a passion for art or dance – or for any of the arts," Lisa explains. "We just wanted to help someone."

The show's success surpassed all expectations and gave the family an opportunity to honor both their parents' legacies: the joy Charles found in painting and Jeanne's decades of teaching young dancers in Westerly. A fellow Foundation donor who knew the family suggested they connect with the Rhode Island Foundation to create a lasting tribute.

The result is the Charles and Jeanne Liguori Memorial Scholarship Fund, which supports graduating seniors at Westerly High School Charles's alma mater and later that of Lisa, David, Michael, and Steven – who are pursuing postsecondary education in any of the arts.

"We didn't want to restrict the fund to dance or art," Lisa says. "Music, theater, art, dance – anything under the arts. We wanted to help students in memory of mom and dad." Just as Charles and Jeanne built something lasting from a chance encounter on a stormy day, their family has transformed their parents' legacy into something equally enduring – a scholarship that will give students the chance to pursue their artistic dreams, year after year, in the town Charles and Jeanne called home.

# Christine C. McNulty Memorial Teacher Scholarship



For Christine McNulty, teaching wasn't simply a career, it was a calling that defined her life. After graduating from the University of Rhode Island in 1963, Christine devoted 33 years to the Warwick Public School system, spending 20 of those years at Park Elementary School, where she joyfully taught first graders with warmth and sensitivity.

"She loved Park School, and she found a lot of purpose there. She really liked the kids and the whole atmosphere," recalls Dan McNulty, Christine's husband of 59 years. "She always knew that she wanted to be a teacher."

Christine's impact also extended beyond her classroom walls. She worked tirelessly to meet each student's individual needs, whether they were learning English as a second language or facing challenges at home. She put in extra hours to tailor her teaching, ensuring that every child felt valued

and part of 'the same team,' rather than separated by what made each of them unique.

"I'm in awe of the welcoming learning environment she created," says her son Ryan, who followed in his mother's footsteps, becoming a high school teacher. "Looking back on it with the perspective of being a teacher now and understanding how much work you have to put in to introduce first-graders to the world of learning – the countless hours correcting assignments, planning lessons, and immaculately decorating her classroom, with amazing bulletin boards that changed with the seasons and the units – I appreciate the sheer amount of effort and hard work she invested, in ways that I couldn't when I was a young kid."

Even after retiring in 1996, Christine couldn't stay away from the classroom. She volunteered for more than a decade at Park Elementary and then at Matunuck Elementary School in South Kingstown, continuing the work she loved so dearly.

When Christine passed away in January 2025, Dan wanted to honor her legacy and passion for education. Working with their lawyers and the Rhode Island Foundation, the McNulty family established the Christine C. McNulty Memorial Teacher Scholarship to support Warwick's Pilgrim High School students pursuing teaching careers.

"The Foundation has been very easy to work with," Ryan shares. "It was a smooth process to set up the finances, and the Foundation's team helped to connect us with Pilgrim High School. We're really looking forward to awarding the scholarship for the first time."

# Moran-Ventre Charitable Fund



For nearly four decades, the Moran-Ventre Charitable Foundation has worked to improve the quality of life for Rhode Islanders with intellectual and developmental disabilities by addressing real needs – the things that help make life more comfortable, accessible, and full of possibility.

"Whether focusing on funding a wheelchair van, an air conditioner, a washing machine, or making a shower accessible, this foundation has truly mattered," says Tim Moran, son of Moran-Ventre Charitable Fund co-founder John E. Moran, Sr., and the organization's vice president. "These grassroots efforts have changed individual lives, and the gratitude we've witnessed is the true legacy of my parents, our donors, and our larger community."

Founded in 1986 by John E. Moran, Sr. and Jerry Ventre, the Foundation emerged from Jerry's firsthand experience working with people with disabilities. As Executive Director of the Arc of Northern Rhode Island, Jerry recognized that traditional funding sources couldn't address every gap. The Foundation became a safety net, responding directly to individual requests and supporting community programs that strengthened Rhode Island's network of care.

Jerry's commitment extended far beyond his professional role – it was deeply personal. Jerry is the guardian for two people with disabilities. He and his wife Sandy also adopted their son Matthew, who came to them as a foster child at age two with severe disabilities. When they adopted him three years later, doctors had said he would never walk

or talk. "But you should see him now," Jerry says proudly. "He's incredible. He has perfect pitch and plays keyboard in a band. We couldn't imagine life without him." Matthew is now 45 years old and a beloved member of Jerry and Sandy's household – living proof of what love, commitment, and belief in potential can achieve.

The philosophy that guided the Foundation was also rooted in the Morans' deeply held values. "My father often reminded us, 'It's not all yours, you know,'" Tim recalls. "That spirit of giving shaped our family and this foundation."

The long-time assistance of the Moran-Ventre Charitable Foundation improved the lives of many – from adaptive yoga classes to scholarships for Special Education professionals, from group home improvements to their "Good Times with Friends" bowling league, which brought together as many as 140 participants, with and without disabilities.

Most recently, as the Foundation's leadership team approached retirement, they sought a partner who could assist with continuing their vital work far into the future. When the Board heard the Rhode Island Foundation's presentation, the path forward became clear.

"When our Board learned about the opportunity to perpetuate our mission – that was the lynchpin for us," shares Dave Hanna, the Foundation's Secretary/Treasurer.

Today, the newly established Moran-Ventre Charitable Fund at the Rhode Island Foundation ensures the mission of supporting nonprofits serving Rhode Islanders with disabilities endures, and an advisory committee will help guide grantmaking.

"We'll still have involvement and know that the funds are safely invested at the Rhode Island Foundation," explains Jerry. "The fund, and the Moran-Ventre name, will continue making a difference in people's lives – that's our legacy."

## Peter L. Moreau Fund



When asked why he established a scholarship fund at the Rhode Island Foundation, long-time educator Peter Moreau replies with gratitude and without hesitation: "I've been given so much by this community. I wanted to provide funds for scholarships for Lincoln students."

For Peter, Lincoln isn't just his hometown, it's the center of his life's work. After graduating from Lincoln High School and earning degrees from both Dartmouth and Assumption Colleges, he returned home to teach mathematics, French, and social studies. He also chaired the Mathematics Department for both the high school and middle school during a professional career spanning 31 years, driven by a passion for improving the lives of his students.

And that passion didn't end with retirement. For the past 15 years, Peter has run a before-school advanced mathematics program at all four of Lincoln's elementary schools, while continuing to tutor students individually. It's work that earned him recognition as Teacher of the Year three times and that keeps him connected to the community he loves.

For many years, Peter awarded more than 50 scholarships to graduating Lincoln High seniors, personally funding them directly through the school. But he wanted something more permanent, so he established the Peter L. Moreau Fund to support the Lincoln Teachers Association Scholarship Fund. "Creating this endowed fund will ensure the scholarships will continue, even beyond my lifetime," he explains.

His decision to work with the Rhode Island Foundation came naturally – since 1991 he has served on the scholarship committee for the Richard W. Szumita Memorial Scholarship, a Foundation scholarship fund, and understood how the organization operated. "It's been an easy process to establish this fund," Peter notes. "Now it will grow on its own and will be able to award more scholarship money."

"The need is real," Peter emphasizes. "Some people may think that all students in Lincoln are wealthy, or don't need financial assistance, but many of them do. For a family, the cost of education is exorbitant."

Through decades of teaching, coaching, tutoring, and working with many community organizations from the Recreation Department to the National Park Service, Peter has become part of Lincoln's fabric. As a Rhode Island Foundation 1916 Society member who has included the Foundation in his estate plan, he's now taken his philanthropy one step further, ensuring that his support for Lincoln's students extends far into the future.

Each scholarship awarded in Peter's name represents not just financial assistance, but the enduring belief of a dedicated educator that every student deserves a chance to succeed.

## Mount Hope Community Center Flexible Endowment Fund



For more than four decades, the Mount Hope Community Center has been a cornerstone of the Mount Hope neighborhood on Providence's East Side, serving one of Rhode Island's oldest Black communities with unwavering commitment. Originally established in 1981 to provide recreational programming for Black youth, the Center has grown and evolved into an intergenerational hub offering everything from WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) assistance to senior programs, free tax preparation, small business development initiatives, food delivery and utility support, as well as enrichment activities like swimming, basketball, and arts and crafts.

"We remain deeply committed to meeting the needs of our neighborhood," says Helen Baskerville-Dukes, Executive Director. Under her leadership, the Center has expanded to include a literacy program, a forgivable microloan initiative to support and sustain local businesses, and plans for 12 units of affordable housing.

Board Chair Ray Watson has deep roots in the neighborhood and the organization – with his grandmother once serving on the board of directors. As a former Executive Director of Mount Hope Community Center, he recalls the challenges

following the 2008 housing crisis. "Funding was cut, but our staff were willing to volunteer their time, especially during the summer months, to make sure young people had a place to go," he says. Years later, the Center stands stronger than ever, addressing changing neighborhood needs, while honoring the voices of families who remain spiritually and emotionally connected to the community.

As the organization confronts ongoing challenges, from gentrification threatening the neighborhood's character to economic uncertainties affecting nonprofit funding, its leadership looked to ensure long-term stability. Inspired by the strong returns and expertise offered by the Rhode Island Foundation, Board Treasurer Dennis Soares brought a proposal to establish the Mount Hope Community Center Flexible Endowment Fund.

"We wanted to strengthen our balance sheet and protect our programs from being at risk due to decisions made at the state and federal level," explains their Board Treasurer. "The Foundation provided access to investment vehicles that wouldn't otherwise be available to an organization of our size and background."

This new endowed fund anchors the Center's vision for the neighborhood's future. Goals include preserving homes for generational residents, preventing properties from being flipped by investors with no community connection, and potentially building a new community center. "This fund makes people feel confident investing in our initiatives," Watson shares. "We have this structure in place. We're not going away in five years, and those investments won't be going down the drain."

Baskerville-Dukes looks to the future with confidence: "Our goal now is to continue growing the fund. With this financial foundation, we can ensure the Mount Hope Community Center remains a vital resource, fostering growth and opportunity for all who call this community home."

"The Rhode Island Foundation has been our partner for nearly two decades," Watson reflects. "They've helped us learn how to fish, putting us in a position to do the fishing ourselves. If the Foundation hadn't supported us over these past decades, we wouldn't be where we are today."

# Vito Paglia Memorial Scholarship



When Vito Paglia immigrated to the United States from Italy as a young man, he carried with him values that would define his 88 years of life: hard work, generosity, and an unwavering commitment to supporting his family, friends, and community. These same values now live on through the Vito Paglia Memorial Scholarship, established at the Rhode Island Foundation to support North Providence High School students who embody a strength of character, a strong work ethic, and a willingness to help others.

For 65 years, Vito owned and operated Vito's Hair Salon in North Providence, where he was much more than a hair stylist, he was a trusted confidant to countless clients. "What happened in the chair, stayed in the chair," recalls his daughter Maria, a retired North Providence High School teacher. "He was a barber but often like a counselor for people. He was trustworthy – I think that's why he had so

many friends. It was reassuring for people to have someone to talk to, someone they could rely on to keep their confidence."

Vito's compassion extended far beyond his salon. Having navigated the immigration process himself, he sponsored others making the same journey to America. There was always an extra plate at his dinner table for family, friends, or someone working at his house. His wife Dolores, with whom Vito shared 67 years of marriage, remembers him as "a hardworking, generous man" who made a difference in more lives than they ever realized.

"We had no idea how many people he had touched and who loved him," Dolores reflects, recalling the many who attended his wake and funeral, each sharing stories of Vito's kindness and support.

Beyond his work as a barber, Vito had a passion for winemaking that brought him national and international awards, but more importantly, it brought his loved ones together. Family and friends would gather for the preparation process, working side by side, and then share celebratory dinners—moments that created memories and deepened the connections he treasured.

After Vito's passing, Maria—who taught for 37 years at North Providence High School and served as Special Education Department Chair for much of her career—witnessed firsthand the transformative power of scholarships through her work on the school's scholarship committee. To honor her father's legacy, she explored the options for establishing a scholarship fund, and the school's guidance director recommended the Rhode Island Foundation.

The Foundation's endowment approach was a perfect fit with investment earnings providing annual scholarships, ensuring the fund will grow over time to support deserving students – and making certain that Vito's spirit of quiet generosity continues in the community he called home.

# Portuguese American Scholarship Foundation Fund



## Portuguese American Scholarship Foundation

For Henry Gonsalves, the decision to dissolve the Portuguese American Scholarship Foundation doesn't represent an ending, but a new chapter.

Invited to join the Portuguese American Scholarship Foundation by a community member from the Newport area, Henry became deeply involved – serving as board member, treasurer, and eventually president. The organization, founded in the mid-1990s, built a proud tradition of supporting students studying Portuguese language and culture, offering a generous scholarship model that funded recipients through their entire college journey. "Most scholarships would be for a year only," Henry recalls. "This organization followed the student through all four years, which was kind of a big deal."

But sustaining a volunteer-driven nonprofit is no small feat. Over time, finding people willing to step into leadership roles becomes increasingly difficult. Rather than see the organization's good work come to a halt, Henry proposed a practical and lasting solution to his board – transferring the funds to the Rhode Island Foundation to ensure scholarships would continue reaching students in perpetuity.

That vision became a reality through the Portuguese American Scholarship Foundation

Fund, a designated fund supporting the Institute for Portuguese and Lusophone World Studies at Rhode Island College. The Institute promotes Portuguese language and Lusophone cultures, and annually awards scholarships to students concentrating or minoring in Portuguese, as well as those studying abroad in Portuguese-speaking nations.

What gives Henry and his former board particular peace of mind is the Rhode Island Foundation's commitment to honoring donor intent – even across generations. Should Rhode Island College ever cease to offer Portuguese studies, the Foundation will direct the funding to another organization carrying that same mission forward, ensuring the founders' original vision endures.

For the many who worked to build the Portuguese American Scholarship Foundation over the years, this fund is a lasting testament to their dedication, and it remains open to contributions from anyone wishing to support educational opportunities for future students. "Our donors and volunteers worked hard to raise that money and administer the scholarship," reflects Henry. "If you want to have that work memorialized, this is a great vehicle for that."

# RITA Foundation BellMax Building Fund

When Danny Bell first joined the Rhode Island Trucking Association (RITA) decades ago, the organization – a nonprofit trade association made up of owner-operators, fleet owners, motor carriers, and allied industries united to promote highway safety, provide information and education, and give members a voice in legislative matters – operated from a basement in East Providence. Today, thanks in part to Danny’s extraordinary generosity, RITA operates from a stunning headquarters on Bald Hill Road in Warwick, a building to be maintained in perpetuity through the RITA Foundation BellMax Building Fund.

“It was fate. It was luck,” reflects Bell, describing his nearly 40-year friendship with RITA President and CEO Chris Maxwell that began when Bell’s Ocean State Oil serviced D’Ambra Construction, where Maxwell started his career. Their bond deepened through shared leadership roles – both served as RITA board chairs – and a mutual passion for the trucking industry, essential to Rhode Island’s supply chain.

For Danny, the decision to establish this fund was deeply personal—a way to give back to the association that had been instrumental in his business success over the decades. But when it came time to name the fund, another of Danny’s thoughtful gestures spoke volumes about the bond between the two friends.

“Because of the friendship and successful partnership we’ve shared over the past 40 years, Danny generously wanted to merge our two names into this fund,” Maxwell explains. The “BellMax” name – combining Bell and Maxwell – represents Danny’s selfless recognition of their long-time service to RITA and their mutual commitment to the industry they both love.

“This is our more noble calling,” says Maxwell, describing the RITA Foundation’s mission of “Moving Minds,” a slogan coined by RITA’s former



Chairwoman, Deborah Katz, to inspire the next generation through educational programs, scholarships, and workforce development. The RITA Foundation, established in 2017, is the organization’s charitable arm and operates from the very building that the BellMax Fund will sustain and support.

Built in 2007 and acquired in 2021, the multi-million-dollar headquarters represents far more than office space – it’s a symbol of how far RITA has come since 1931 and, more importantly, the collective strength of its membership.

“We’ve entrusted the Rhode Island Foundation; our investment is protected and has the perpetual resources to stand strong,” explains Maxwell. “Future generations will derive the benefits of the fund’s distributions but never be able to deviate from its intended purpose.”

The organization’s foresight ensures that future RITA leaders will inherit not just a building, but a protected asset that will continue to support its essential work. “This building is here to serve the industry,” Bell emphasizes, expressing the spirit of stewardship that has sustained RITA for 95 years and will carry it confidently toward its centennial celebration.

Concludes Maxwell, “Part of our duty as custodians of this really epic association is to leave it protected with funds like this one.”

# Share the Joy Charitable Fund

When native Rhode Islanders Mary Jean “MJ” Miniati and Vincent Prattico first met, each had experienced profound loss. Vinny had lost his wife of 27 years, and MJ, her husband and her cherished son, Alex. Yet despite tragedy, MJ and Vinny managed to find each other and a renewed sense of joy, connected by mutual friends and bound by shared values, faith, and love of family. When they married in June of this year, they realized they already had everything they needed.

Rather than accept wedding gifts, the couple chose to direct them to the Rhode Island Foundation to establish the Share the Joy Charitable Fund, supporting causes deeply meaningful to them: the Alex’s Smile Fund at Meeting Street School and the Christian Brothers Academy in Albany, New York.

MJ’s son, Alex Miniati, was born with quadriplegic cerebral palsy and passed away suddenly at age four and a half. Though he couldn’t walk or talk, his infectious smile and joyful spirit touched everyone who knew him. “Even though he was never able to speak, he taught me more about life than any single person,” MJ reflects. “He was truly happy with what he had – family and friends.”

As a tribute to her son, MJ established the Alex’s Smile Fund at Meeting Street School while her son was a student there, and together they raised funds

to build Meeting Street’s therapeutic pool, now used daily by hundreds of children and which supports the school’s aquatic therapy program.

Vinny’s commitment to Christian Brothers Academy honors his late wife, also a former board member. The school provided the couple’s sons with a strong foundation and leadership skills, and the Pratticos were dedicated to raising money to assist students with tuition costs, particularly for students who were musicians, like their youngest son. Explains Vinny, “We realized there were a lot of scholarships for athletes, but not many for those who were musicians.”

Introduced to the work of the Rhode Island Foundation by MJ’s brother Peter, a professional advisor, MJ and Vinny found what they envisioned. “The Fund was exactly what we had in mind...we’re not rich; we don’t have a ton of money,” MJ shares. “We’ve worked hard, and we just want to give back because we have enough.”

Now both retired, they hope to inspire others. “Regular folks who aren’t incredibly wealthy can still be philanthropic and create a legacy,” MJ emphasizes. “For us, much joy has come from much sadness. This helps keep our loved ones’ memories alive.”



# Waterson Family Fund

For Bruce and Carol Waterson, success includes never forgetting their roots. Both were raised in large Rhode Island families with modest means, and those early experiences have shaped much of who they are and where they focus their time and attention – including their decision to establish a donor-advised fund at the Rhode Island Foundation.

Bruce's path to business ownership wasn't conventional. After 28 years in the scrap business, working his way from entry-level to management without a college degree, he found himself facing limited options. "Because I didn't have that education, it was hard to advance," he recalls. But in 2000, Bruce and Carol took a leap of faith, founding Waterson Terminal Services, now one of New England's largest deep-water port operators.

"It was scary for a few years, but we ended up being successful," says Bruce. "We have not forgotten where we came from, and we want to help people in whatever way we can."

Their donor-advised fund supports causes close to their hearts, including the Rhode Island Community Food Bank, Ronald McDonald House, and Foster Forward, with each organization reflecting a personal connection. Their commitment to the Rhode Island Community Food Bank reflects their family's generous spirit and recognizes their good

fortune. "There are so many people struggling with food insecurity," shares Carol. "We have an abundance, and we want to help those who need a little help." The Watersons have sponsored a room at the Ronald McDonald House ever since an employee lost her five-year-old daughter to cancer several years ago, recognizing the comfort the family received by staying at the Ronald McDonald House to be close to her. The couple discovered Foster Forward through their daughter-in-law Lauren's board involvement and were quickly drawn to its mission. "We were so impressed, and we wanted to be a part of it," Carol says of the organization's vital work with young people in foster care.

Their newly created fund is designed for sustainability, ensuring that the causes they care about receive meaningful support both now and well into the future. By naming their children – Brian and Kaitlin Waterson of Carlisle, MA, and Chris and Lauren Waterson of Providence, RI – as well as their three grandchildren as successors, the Watersons hope to instill philanthropic values across generations, allowing them to make a lasting impact in the communities they call home. The Rhode Island Foundation proved to be the ideal partner for their vision. "Working with the Foundation was great, and the process was very simple," notes Bruce.

"We've been truly blessed and we've been able to do a lot for our family," says Carol, reflecting on their fifty years of marriage. "But it's important to me that people understand that everybody is family. We need to have compassion and reach out to those in need."



## How to work with us

# Only together can we create progress that lasts.

Separately, we can have impact, but only together, can we build the future we all hope for.

As a nonpartisan public charity, we accept charitable gifts of all shapes and sizes, and we pool and invest those gifts in financial markets so that they grow over time.

We use a responsible portion of the proceeds from those investments to make grants, provide scholarships, and support organizations and efforts focused on strengthening our communities and enhancing the quality of life in our state.

Giving to the Foundation is much more than a financial transaction. You're able to work with experts in charitable giving and grantmaking professionals who are working daily with the state's nonprofit sector.

No matter how much you give, you are part of a powerful force for good, helping to address community priorities essential for a thriving state.

## Ways to give

### Establish a Fund

Create an unrestricted fund, donor-advised fund, designated fund, or field-of-interest fund in alignment with the Foundation's Community Priorities and to support causes important to you.

### Support an Existing Fund

Contribute to the Fund for Rhode Island or another established fund that aligns with your interests.

### Planned Giving

Include the Foundation in your will, donate securities, or explore options like charitable trusts and annuities.

## Partner with Us

### Flexibility

There are many ways to give. We'll work with you, or your advisor, to determine the simplest – and best – way to make your philanthropic hopes a reality.

### Sound Investments

Charitable gifts become part of one of three highly-diversified investment pools. We'll work with you to choose a pool that fits. Our scale allows access to some of the top-performing money managers in the country.

### Expertise

We know Rhode Island. Our team of grant makers and philanthropic advisors will work to ensure that your charitable gift has impact. We have the resources, relationships, and expertise to offer guidance and to perform necessary due diligence.

### Permanence

Through the Rhode Island Foundation, your charitable dollars create a permanent legacy in, and for, Rhode Island.

### Tax Benefits

The Foundation is a 501(c)(3) public charity as classified by the Internal Revenue Service. Your contributions qualify for the maximum allowable deduction for income, gift, and estate tax purposes.

## How to Get Started

Every act of giving makes an impact. Collectively, they're a force that shapes our state.

Connect with a member of our development team at [giving@rifoundation.org](mailto:giving@rifoundation.org) or by calling (401) 427-4040 to learn more.