COVER STORY

It’s All About . . . Access to Art
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Photo courtesy the Parrish Art Museum
Did You Know?

While Long Island is home to world renowned research facilities and high tech industry, only 4.8 percent of Long Island’s workers are in science and engineering fields as compared to the national average of 5.7 percent.

For more than 35 years, the Long Island Community Foundation has supported programs that enrich the lives of all Long Islanders. We look for opportunities where we can make a difference. Join us today.

Q&A | Insights from our Summer Intern
— Stephanie Wong, Finance and Information Systems at the University of Florida

What has been your favorite thing about interning at LICF?

I love how LICF values entrepreneurial spirit and creativity. My supervisor would suggest something like, “We should try to create a new database structure—can you look into that?” With few guidelines, I could add my own ideas and perspectives to the project. If I needed more direction, I could ask, but it was empowering.

What attracted you to work at LICF?

Growing up, I always volunteered whenever I had time because I enjoyed it. Being exposed to the nonprofit community strengthened my conviction in the unbounded good that nonprofits can do. When I had the chance to work at LICF, I was intrigued and excited. Although I wasn’t familiar with community foundations, I was attracted to LICF’s due diligence and financial stewardship in helping people do the most good with their giving.

Did you find the internship useful, and if so, why?

Absolutely. Not only did I discover the benefits of community foundations compared to private/family foundations or commercial funds, but I learned that working behind the scenes alongside individuals with the best intentions for the community is phenomenal. The work ethic in this atmosphere is what every intern or young employee dreams of experiencing.

“Hope” for Westbury Students

In Westbury, a community already facing high poverty and unemployment, and lower-than-average high school graduation rates, the school district is struggling with a surging immigrant population, including an estimated 130 unaccompanied minors from Latin America, half of whom were homeless. Adding to the district’s challenges, 77 percent of students are eligible for free lunches, and 30 percent know only limited English.

“Achievement gaps among this population begin early and persist,” said Sol Marie Alfonso Jones, senior program officer at the Long Island Community Foundation. “It’s a major barrier to developing a workforce with the problem-solving, technological literacy, scientific reasoning, and mathematical skills necessary for current and future jobs.”

A grant from the foundation is helping close that gap. We’re funding the Espoir Youth Program, which helps these students overcome educational, cultural and language barriers. The afterschool program began last year with about 45 students, integrating STEM activities—science, technology, engineering and math—such as describing geometric objects and constructing bridges.

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Since it began, more than 100 students have been through the program—and now there’s a waiting list.
Museums encourage children to explore new worlds, ideas and different times with hands-on activities, works of art and interactive exhibits. But for kids with cognitive and developmental disabilities, the bright lights, crowds and noise are challenging—even frightening.

Families with children that have special needs often avoid places where the kids may become anxious and up-set. They feel unwelcome.

In response, many museums are making their settings and programs more inclusive and accessible.

With our grant, the Parrish Art Museum in Water Mill started Access Parrish, a program that lets the children with special needs explore artwork in the galleries on Sunday mornings, when the museum is closed to other visitors, then create their own art in a studio workshop. It has three partners: Southampton Public Schools, Flying Point Foundation for Autism, and Westhampton Beach Learning Center.

“Support from the Long Island Community Foundation is helping the Parrish Art Museum increase community engagement for children with special needs and their caregivers,” said Cara Conklin-Wingfield, education director at the Parrish. “Through Access Parrish, we are working to create a supportive environment for East End families to experience art and develop their creativity.”

“Seeing the art gives my students ideas,” said Michael Darcy, Life Skills teacher at Southampton Intermediate School. “We encourage art because it’s very therapeutic and helps balance out the day. We see uniqueness and how each painting reflects a student’s personality.”

Long Island companies are starved for highly skilled workers in high-tech manufacturing such as precision machining and laser production. We want to keep those high-paying jobs—and our young people—close to home. With our grant, the Cradle of Aviation Museum in Garden City produced a students’ guide to careers in aerospace, engineering and manufacturing. So far, the easy-to-navigate guide has been given to 3,000 students, and more than 160 teachers have been recruited to help spread the word. Projects like the Career Pathways Guidebook help connect industry and education—and ensure Long Island’s future.
She’s investing in a cure

Aimee Ackell—teacher, author, and motivational speaker—has lupus. Her sister had lupus and died of kidney failure. Aimee honored her sister’s life by starting the Ann Caroline Corrody Fund with us.

“I turned my struggles and my sister’s challenges into a positive experience,” Aimee says. “Through my fund at the Long Island Community Foundation, I donate money to lupus organizations for research, to find a cure.”

We are honored that Aimee chose the Long Island Community Foundation to do her giving. You can do the same.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE?

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Call us at (631) 991-8800, ext. 223