Investing in Change
Making an investment for tomorrow... today.

COVER STORY

Improving the health and well-being of veterans through yoga.

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Photo credit: Sheryl Sapphire Photography
Did you know?

Suffolk and Nassau counties rank 4th and 5th respectively as New York State counties with the largest number of residents that are historically undercounted in the census. Who are the “hard-to-count”? Young children, renters, immigrants, people of color, and rural households.

Building on the effective work we did for the 2010 census, we’ve joined with The New York Community Trust to establish the New York State Census Equity Fund. We are confident that targeted funding to trusted community organizations can effectively reach hardest-to-count constituents and will help ensure the 2020 census is fair and accurate. We hope you will join us.

Census 2020

The U.S. Constitution requires a count of the nation’s population every 10 years. Getting an accurate count has always been a challenge, but 2020 might be one of the toughest counts yet. That’s why the Long Island Community Foundation is teaming up with foundations, donors, nonprofits, and municipalities to make sure every Long Islander is counted in 2020.

Here, we speak with three of our community partners on their census challenges.

**Pat Young** is the program director at CARECEN, a nonprofit LI immigrant legal services organization.

**Rebecca Sanin** is president and CEO of Health and Welfare Council of Long Island which serves the interests of vulnerable people in Nassau and Suffolk counties.

**Jacob Dixon** is president and CEO of Choice for All, a nonprofit dedicated to improving the quality of life for youth and families in Roosevelt.

Why is the census important to Long Island?

**Rebecca Sanin**: The census is an economic tool used for many funding decisions that impact our communities. In order for effective policy decisions to be made, accurate census data that reflects Long Island’s unique needs is critical.

**Pat Young**: Long Island has experienced great demographic change over the last decade and that needs to be represented in the next census count. Many communities have seen growth due to the arrival of new immigrants from around the world.

If properly conducted, the census will give elected officials a granular view of the vibrant communities these newest Americans are creating.

**Jacob Dixon**: The census is critical to Long Island for three reasons: representation in our democracy, equitable distribution of public funds, and understanding the public landscape of Long Island. The census plays a crucial role in ensuring fair and just inclusion in all facets of life, including representation in all levels of government. Federal and state funding for programs such as education, health care, transit, employment, child care, and roads is based on population. The undercounting of people, especially our most vulnerable, can reduce resources vital to Long Island.

Based on the 2010 census, what are the hardest-to-count populations in our region?

**RS**: Long Island has a significant number of people living in unregistered housing units—garages, basements, illegal apartments and rooms—who are not likely to fill out the census. We also need to work with early learning centers, PTAs, parenting groups, and others to ensure all children are counted because children 0-5 were one of the most undercounted groups in the 2010 census. School funding is based on enrollment, and the impact of an undercount could be devastating. A strategy that educates people about what is at stake for children must be part of any effort.

**JD**: The hardest-to-count communities are predominately African-American and/or Latino. For example, in Roosevelt, only 62 percent of households mailed back their 2010 census questionnaires. As a result, the community received less state and federal funding, resources and representation than it was entitled to receive.

Why every Long Islander needs to be counted!

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What are the challenges to getting an accurate count and what recommendations do you have to ensure we get one?

**PY**: Immigrants don’t arrive in the United States knowing what the census is and why they should participate. Many are afraid that the data collected will be used for repressive purposes. It is of the utmost importance that immigrants be reassured of the confidentiality of the census. This can only be accomplished if the census is seen as beyond the reach of politics and the police.
RS: The anti-immigrant climate created by separating families and targeted deportation efforts makes it challenging to establish trust in immigrant communities. On Long Island, this is compounded by visits by President Donald Trump and Attorney General Jeff Sessions who send the message: Foreigners are to be feared, are joining MS-13, and threaten our quality of life. The anti-Islamic rhetoric also pushes people underground as does the new citizenship question. We must convince our neighbors the census is critically important and encourage participation. One way is to train and support leaders and influencers in hard-to-count communities to convey that message, but we also need to recognize that this is a significant challenge.

JD: This is the first year that the census will be largely filled out online. People need trust that the information they provide the census will be safe and confidential. Educating people on the collection process, use of data, and future implications is key to convincing residents to participate. Bridging the digital divide also is vital. Officials must ensure data is protected and that all residents, particularly seniors, can complete the forms or have access to community institutions, such as libraries, for help.

What are the top state and federally funded programs our counties depend on that are derived from census data?

RS: According to a 2017 report by the U.S. Census Bureau, more than $675 billion was distributed to 132 programs in 2015 based on census data. Among the top programs receiving funds were health care, highways and transit, education and school meals, child care, low-income housing, and disaster relief. It is also important to note that census data determine the number of seats each state receives in the U.S. House of Representatives and is used for district boundaries for the state and county legislatures and several boards in our region. After the 2010 census, New York lost two U.S. House districts. The 2020 census data will determine how many people from our region will be at the table making policy decisions for our region and the nation in the next decade.

Research found that the 2010 census did not accurately represent the diversity of the nation. African Americans were undercounted by about 2.1% and Hispanic Americans by 1.5%. A follow-up survey by the Census Bureau discovered that nearly 2.2 million—or 10%—of all children under 5 in the country—were missed by the 2010 count.

With a $20,000 grant from the Long Island Unitarian Universalist Fund, the Long Beach Latino Civic Association’s Ponte las Pilas program is helping to increase the confidence of Latinos and empowering them to partake in leadership positions and civic engagement.

This year, the Association is recruiting more than 40 participants in the program and providing opportunities for alumni to participate in municipal meetings. It is hosting immigration forums and individualized training sessions facilitated by immigration attorneys to educate residents, business owners, and school personnel on various issues related to immigrants’ rights. The Long Beach Latino Civic Association is removing barriers to civic participation and creating a safe space for residents to be informed of decisions, legislation, and policies that affect them.
Veterans often face ongoing mental health issues and/or physical injuries leading to different degrees of disability. Civilian readjustment, post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, and depression, as well as chronic debilitating combat related injuries have commonly been treated with prescription drugs that sometimes result in addiction. With new research that supports the positive impact of yoga and meditation on stress and trauma, the number of veterans using complementary and alternative medicine therapies to manage life after combat has increased significantly in the past decade.

The Veterans Yoga Project is a national, education and advocacy organization established in 2011 to improve the health and well-being of veterans. It supports recovery and resilience among veterans and their families. The Veterans Yoga Project uses yoga instruction to help veterans recovering from post-traumatic stress or other trauma-related psychological disorders so that they can better regulate mood and behavior and reduce anxiety. The program, known as “Mindful Resilience”, is clinically tested and based on the feedback of hundreds of veterans and active-duty military personnel recovering from post-traumatic stress. Classes are held at Veterans Affairs Centers, community organizations serving veterans, and retreats for veterans and family members.

“Our partnership with LICF has helped our efforts here on Long Island to support veterans with tools that help them breathe easier, focus clearer, move freer, rest deeper, and cultivate gratitude,” says Deb Jeannette, President of Veterans Yoga Project. “These classes enhance coping skills that decrease the negative impacts many veterans are suffering. It also enables them to live more easily in line with their values and goals.”

The Yoga Project provided eight weekly yoga classes at the Northport Veterans Administration Medical Center’s Mental Health Clinic, Substance Abuse Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program, and Dual Diagnosis Recovery Center, serving over 200 veterans.

“I was told about yoga many times here at the VA, I always just figured it was just hokey pokey but one of the other members in the group talked me into going one day and I did feel better after and the next day I had sore muscles so I’m hooked on yoga! Also, I have been practicing at home when I need to take the edge off the pain.” ~Clarke, Army Vietnam Veteran

Veterans Yoga Project is honored to have received two grants from the Long Island Community Foundation totaling $30,000 which provided Mindful Resilience yoga classes to our local Long Island heroes.
Is Your Soap Safe?

Identifying common household products that contain 1,4-dioxane is a major step toward empowering the public to safeguard their health and that of our region’s sole source aquifer.

With a $22,000 grant from the Long Island Community Foundation, 30 common consumer products were sent to a lab near Rochester and tested. Adrienne Esposito, executive director of Citizens Campaign for the Environment said it was the first independent testing of products for 1,4-dioxane in over 10 years.

The products that tested positive: Neutrogena Rainbath Shower and Bath Gel (Ocean Mist), Suave Essentials Body Wash (Wild Cherry Blossom), Bath and Body Works Shower Gel (Sonoma Weekend Escape), Purex plus Oxy Stain Removers (Fresh Morning Burst), OGX Lavender Platinum, John Frieda Brilliant Brunette, Dove Nutritive Solutions (Coconut and Hydration), Tresemme Moisture Rich with Vitamin E, Suave Professionals Moroccan Infusion (Color Care), Garnier Fructis with Active Fruit Protein, Johnson’s Baby Shampoo, Disney Frozen Bubble Bath, Original Bubble Mr. Bubble. The seven products that had no detection of 1,4-dioxane were Mrs. Meyer (Lavender Scent), Seventh Generation (Free and Clear), Ultra Downey April Fresh (Fabric Softener), Aveeno Baby Gentle Wash and Shampoo, The Honest Company Shampoo & Body Wash, Method Body Wash (with Avocado Extract) and Aveeno Active Minerals Pure Renewal.

1,4-dioxane is not an ingredient, but rather a chemical byproduct of a process used to reduce the risk of skin irritation caused by petroleum-based ingredients, and as such, manufacturers do not have to list it on product labels. The risk of 1,4-dioxane goes far beyond the initial skin contact and inhalation of fumes when using products containing this contaminant as it has been detected throughout Long Island’s sole source aquifer. Alarmingly, state and federal government have not yet set a safe standard for drinking water.

The Long Island Community Foundation would like to thank these special donors who generously contributed to our Annual Fund and Collaborative Funds and are helping us enhance the well-being of the people and communities of Long Island.

- JM Kaplan — $25,000 to the Long Island Immigrant Children’s Fund and $25,000 to the Civic Engagement Fund
- Citi Community Development/ PolicyLink — $100,000 to the Racial Equity Fund
- American Contract Bridge League — $15,000 to the LICF Annual Fund
- Hagedorn Family Foundation — $182,700 to the Civic Engagement Fund and $261,000 to the Long Island Immigrant Children’s Fund
- Sisters of Saint Joseph — $5,000 to the Long Island Immigrant Children’s Fund
- Claire Friedlander Family Foundation — $25,000 to the Long Island Opioid Crisis Fund

Is LICF in your will?
The projects you’re reading about here are possible because people left bequests. You can set up a permanent fund. We’ll make grants supporting the causes you care about. Forever.
Helping kids in many ways with just one fund.

“From after-school programs to tutoring to emotional support, kids need a lot to thrive. Our fund in the Long Island Community Foundation makes it easy for us to support a range of organizations helping children.”

— Christine

In addition to giving through their fund, Christine volunteers as a counselor at the Long Island Crisis Center helping young people contemplating suicide.

We are honored they chose the Long Island Community Foundation to help them with their charitable goals. You can do the same.