The Long Island Community Foundation stands with everyone who has been affected by the corona virus pandemic: people who have become ill, people grieving, people facing economic insecurity, and those who have experienced profound disruptions. We are grateful to every individual, business, and organization that has risen to the challenge and continues to meet our community’s needs.

Due to the generosity of foundations and individuals that contributed to the COVID-19 Long Island Philanthropic Response Fund, $1,521,500 was granted to Long Island-based nonprofits responding to pressing community needs. This funding enabled organizations on the frontlines to strengthen their capacity to respond, attend to people in need, protect the human and civil rights of the most vulnerable, and provide a pathway to recovery.

A Look Back

The year 2020 amplified complex challenges facing Long Island. Among the issues that brew worse for our diverse communities are inadequate healthcare, food insecurity, unemployment, housing costs, educational disparities, environmental distress, and racial inequities. While not new, these problems have been exacerbated by the pandemic, which disproportionately affected several racial and ethnic groups—many of whom are essential, though low-wage workers—including undocumented individuals who are ineligible for many public relief programs. At the height of the pandemic in 2020, Long Island was the second-hardest hit region in the state with a higher per capita infection rate than New York City.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, food insecurity increased nearly 50 percent; unemployment reached 16.1 percent – concentrated among low-paying jobs and workers with less education; mental health providers reported a 20 percent increase in referrals, including children; police reported up to a 10 percent increase in domestic violence cases, and homelessness increased by 20 percent. Today, these challenges are on an upward climb and are expected to persist, impeding the capacity of the region to rebound.

Due to the generosity of foundations and individuals that contributed to the COVID-19 Long Island Philanthropic Response Fund, $1,521,500 was granted to 75 Long Island-based nonprofits responding to pressing community needs. This funding enabled organizations on the frontlines to strengthen their capacity to respond, attend to people in need, protect the human and civil rights of the most vulnerable, and provide a pathway to recovery.
Feeding the East End

Despite the Hamptons’ reputation for wealth, food instability has long existed in our East End communities. The pandemic worsened the situation. Workers in the service sector were laid off and found it difficult to feed themselves and their families, many for the first time.

AFTEE (All for the East End), a field-of-interest fund at LICF, raised nearly $1.5 million through its Feed the Need Campaign and granted support to 35 community-based nonprofit organizations in the towns of Riverhead, Southampton, East Hampton, Southold, and Shelter Island. The AFTEE Feed the Need Campaign is a unified effort among businesses, government leaders, concerned community members, and others raising funds to address the rapidly growing food insecurity of the region and other issues due to the pandemic.

“This Campaign helped nonprofits bring healthy, local food to the most vulnerable families,” said David Okorn, executive director of the Long Island Community Foundation. “It also provided support to local farming and guaranteed access to healthy local food for the most vulnerable segments of the East End Community beyond the growing season.”

Not Just About Food

Even before the COVID-19 crisis, approximately one in three U.S. families experienced a lack of diapers, a public health issue exacerbated by the growing economic and unemployment crisis caused by the pandemic. Infants require up to 12 diapers a day and toddlers need about eight, making the cost as much as $80 per month, per child.

With over $45,000 in grants from LICF’s COVID Response Fund, AFTEE, the SAR Family Fund, and the Yurman Family, The Allied Foundation Diaper Bank has been able to fill an important void in getting diapers to low-income families. Currently, the government does not recognize diapers as a basic need and therefore no program allocates dollars specifically for their purchase.

Any time there is an increase in the cost of material necessities, like diapers, it impacts people living in poverty, and those who lack the money necessary to meet their basic needs.

Allied has distributed more than 250,000 diapers and nearly 175,000 wipes to families in Nassau and Suffolk counties because of the funding from our generous donors. Working through Long Island Cares food pantries, including walk-up sites, mobile pantries and through a network of 580 member agencies, the number of families that were helped from these efforts peaked over 6,500; including families from five of Long Island’s Indigenous Nations on the East End.

“More parents are facing diaper need due to loss of employment or other hardship caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Children in low-income families are at the greatest risk of experiencing diaper needs because many families cannot afford a sufficient supply for their babies. The diapers we distribute have provided much-needed relief to young families who struggle to afford enough diapers to keep their babies clean, dry, and healthy,” said Heather Edwards, executive director of Allied Foundation.
LICF Takes to the Beach!

Though we were unable to hold our annual donor reception last year due to the pandemic, we were able to give our donors an extraordinary experience this September at the Jones Beach Energy and Nature Center.

Unique within the New York State Parks system, the Jones Beach Energy & Nature Center specifically addresses how energy use affects the natural landscape. The Center’s vision is to provide opportunities for visitors to learn about clean energy as well as about the local natural setting that makes Jones Beach unique. LICF is proud to be a supporter of this interactive center. This state-of-the-art facility is made possible through a partnership between The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, and a consortium of public and private partners.

Through educational, interactive exhibits and programs, the Center provides an incredible experience for families, businesses, students, and educators to learn about our connection to nature. The Center will lead many to have a new appreciation and understanding of our natural and constructed environments and showcases ways we can become better environmental stewards.

A special thanks to all the folks at the Jones Beach Energy and Nature Center for hosting us and giving our donors this unique experience!

Director and chief curator, Jeanne Haffner, welcomes our donors and talks about the educational and interactive features of the Jones Beach Energy and Nature Center.
Looking Ahead

Nothing says “looking to the future” more than starting college!

Recently, Northwell Health connected with us to establish a scholarship program to assist college-bound dependents of its employees – primarily students pursuing degrees in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). The $10,000 renewable scholarships are meant to ease the financial burden of Northwell Health employees sending youngsters to college. By focusing on STEM and healthcare-related fields, the aid stands a good chance of ultimately supporting high paying jobs in healthcare and other sectors.

On behalf of Northwell Health, LICF has awarded scholarships to 15 students since the program started last year, 10 of which have been renewed, bringing the total to $250,000.

“Higher education can provide many benefits, including the increased opportunity to prosperous careers, financial security, and to improve one’s overall quality of life,” says David Okorn, executive director of the Long Island Community Foundation. “As such, we are proud to partner with Northwell Health for this program. We applaud Northwell’s commitment to their employees and family members.”

Northwell Health’s scholarship is just one of 20 scholarships that are administered by the Long Island Community Foundation. For the past two years, we have awarded 65 bright and deserving students over $350,000 in scholarships.

“Receiving this scholarship has proven that hard work pays off, especially for my mom who has done so much to support me and my astrophysics aspirations. Not only has this scholarship significantly reduced the financial burden of tuition for my mom and me—allowing me much-needed peace of mind during such an unprecedented time—but it has affirmed my belief in my potential, abilities, and goals both inside and out of school. Thank you, Northwell!”

-Alex Savino, Barnard University

“I’ve wanted to study abroad during college for as long as I can remember, however as I got closer to entering university the financial aspect of this increasingly became more of a concern. Thanks to the Northwell Health Employees’ Dependents Scholarship, I can realize my dreams of studying abroad without having to worry about financial constraints. I’m so excited to be able to experience so many new opportunities that otherwise may have not been a possibility for me!”

-Blanca G. Castillo, St. John’s University

“Receiving this Northwell scholarship has really made a huge impact on my first year at college at Stony Brook University, and I am so grateful for the opportunity it has provided!”

-Jillian Chamberlin, Stony Brook University

“The generous contribution of the Northwell Health Scholarship will enable me to pursue my interest in becoming a biomedical engineer. The financial assistance will provide me with the opportunity to dedicate time towards conducting an internship to gain hands-on learning experience in this exciting field. The scholarship has also allowed me to overcome setbacks along my journey and spend more time focusing on goals without the fear of failure.”

-Nolan Kata, University of Virginia

“I am so grateful for this scholarship from LICF and Northwell Health. It helps me feel like I’m repaying my parents for their hard work day in and day out, which has allowed me to live such a happy, fulfilling life. To my parents, it is a recognition of my dedication to my studies throughout high school and now at Cornell, which they’ve instilled in me from a young age. I will never forget the moment we found out I was granted the scholarship—it felt incredibly surreal and rewarding for all of us. Thank you!”

-Sophie Vernik, Cornell University

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Is LICF in your will? Create a legacy through a permanent fund in LICF. It is an effective way of making sure the causes you care about will benefit from your generosity forever. Let us show you ways to balance your family commitments and your philanthropic wishes. You can give what’s left after your loved ones are cared for.

Contributing to our Annual Fund, helps improve life on Long Island! You choose how we put your gift to work—from protecting our natural resources to advance and prepare students for the workforce.

We can match you with the perfect organizations to support.

Contact Marie Smith at (631) 991-8800, ext. 223 today!

licf.org
An American Story: A Lifetime of Service to Others

Anita and Bill Thomas served their family, friends, and community with uncompromising love, compassion, and strength. Two beautiful souls that were always meant to be together. They both died of the coronavirus, just six days apart.

As a result of earlier estate planning, they created a charitable trust as a memorial to their son, who was tragically lost in 1974. The Eric E. Thomas Memorial Fund was set up in trust to support nonprofits across Long Island that will help children with disabilities. They lived their lives serving others and their generosity will continue forever.