

New Canaan Cares  
Meg Domino  
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The New Canaan Community Foundation provides valuable and measurable support to youth and families through its consistent and generous funding of New Canaan CARES health promotion programs. As an independent nonprofit organization that relies on individual donors and grant support to fund more than 100 programs annually, CARES looks to NCCF as a model of philanthropic leadership. This past year, NCCF supported youth, family and community building initiatives that touched more than 1,200 New Canaan residents and families from neighboring towns. These efforts included a full-day with renowned author and international parenting expert, Michael Thompson, PhD, who worked with youth and families on the topic of "The Pressured Child," including its many manifestations from preschool through adulthood. Dr. Thompson's programs (6 total), brought clarity and perspective to challenging topics including bullying, college pressure, and the elusive pursuit of perfection. Through NCCF funding of ongoing Parent/Community Education, CARES was able to provide follow-up daytime and evening sessions that afforded attendees hands-on opportunities to address individual issues and apply their skills in small group settings.

This coming year, NCCF funds will support the piloting of our "Community Ambassador Program," a much requested middle school program designed to build the confidence and competence of incoming fifth graders interested in learning effective and measurable methods of serving their community. NCCF support of similar CARES youth initiatives, has resulted in local and state recognition, including 3 award-winning Positive Youth Development programs: KidPOWER (elementary) graders, and Mentoring through Drama (middle and high school), and Leadership Challenge (high school). These programs follow the CARES formula of providing an opportunity for youth to apply their skills by working with various age-groups (preschool through senior citizens) in the pursuit of individual and community health. These parent and community education programs have been CARES mission and legacy to New Canaan for nearly 35 years. They have touched tens of thousands of lives, setting us apart as an organization, and connecting us as a community. CARES is indebted to the support and involvement of NCCF, its board members, and its donors. We simply could not do what we do without you!