



New Canaan Community Foundation Launches New Community Behavioral Health Fund

To coincide with Mental Health Awareness Month, the Foundation is Welcoming the Community To Participate By Donating in the Month of May Towards its Challenge Match

New Canaan, CT (May 3, 2023)—The New Canaan Community Foundation, the non-profit charity organization in New Canaan, CT that mobilizes resources from residents and institutions to address community needs and support local nonprofits, announced today the launch of a new Community Behavioral Health Fund. This dedicated fund will allow residents to directly impact and improve behavioral health in New Canaan and surrounding towns. The fund will increase visibility and decrease stigma of mental and behavioral health, conduct research and analysis to provide a birds-eye view of trends and progress, and increase access to services for individuals, families, and institutions.

"The Community Behavioral Health Fund is an important step forward in our ongoing commitment to address the critical need for behavioral health resources and support in our community," said Lauren Patterson, President and CEO of the New Canaan Community Foundation. "We know that investing in behavioral health is essential to the overall well-being of our community. We are excited to launch this fund and are grateful for the community's support as we work together to improve access, reduce stigma, and improve outcomes for individuals and families."

The Community Behavioral Health Fund is a community-based and volunteer-led fund that will mobilize resources through a multi-year initiative and invest in both the short-term and long-term behavioral health of the community. These efforts will organize dollars to:

- support continued access to services for residents, reducing barriers and learning from progress.
- improve, track, and understand local data, to follow trends, understand the impact of interventions, and coordinate partners on key efforts.
- address ways to decrease stigma – a top priority noted from research – finding ways for individuals to feel supported and for the community to come together.

Since the New Canaan Community Foundation was established in 1977, funds have broadly touched nonprofits that focus on providing mental and behavioral health services including substance use prevention, education, and treatment, and a longer list of organizations that support individuals and families in building positive relationships, improving community wellness, and intervening during crises. It was not until 2019 that the Foundation formed a Behavioral Health Committee, composed of resident leaders in the New Canaan community, to further emphasize and centralize conversations and needs in this area.

In these four years – during a time when environmental and social factors continued to exacerbate behavioral health issues in our community – the organization made a significant impact in the community. Most notably, the Foundation invested nearly \$350,000 in grants through the Behavioral Health Committee, deploying behavioral health dollars through the COVID-19 Response Fund, and championing the establishment of the New Canaan Urgent Assessment Program at Silver Hill Hospital.

To launch the Community Behavioral Health Fund, the Foundation is calling on the community to take action during the month of May. The Foundation aims to raise \$500,000 for the new fund, and a small group of generous donors have pledged to match donations, up to \$200,000, to kickstart the next phase of the Foundation's work. Individuals can donate by visiting the Foundation's website at www.newcanaancf.org.

Additionally, the Foundation is launching a social media campaign aimed at reducing stigma and promoting open discussion around mental health. Throughout the month of May, individuals can engage with the Foundation on Instagram at @newcanaancommunityfdn and facebook.com/NewCanaanCommunityFoundation.

About the New Canaan Community Foundation

The New Canaan Community Foundation, formed in 1977, serves as New Canaan's local partner for advice, leadership and facilitation of charitable giving. The Foundation's vision strives for a New Canaan that comes together to address both individual and local challenges, enriching the lives of all community members. The New Canaan Community Foundation works with individuals and organizations to achieve their philanthropic goals through donor-advised funds and other partnerships. Learn more at www.newcanaancf.org



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About the Community Behavioral Health Fund

The Community Behavioral Health Fund is a community-based and volunteer-led fund with a multi-year focus on addressing both the short-term and long-term behavioral health in New Canaan and surrounding communities. The fund aims to mobilize resources for continued access to services, decrease stigma, improve data tracking, forge partnerships across sectors, advocate for policies and funding, and document learning. The New Canaan Community Foundation will be a vehicle to bring together information from across the community and the behavioral health system, addressing issues in a way that is smart for the whole ecosystem.

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