

Tackling Racial Disparities in Mental Health

The Steve Fund Launches Task Force to Support Students of Color



The Steve Fund's conferences elevate the voices of students advocating for comprehensive mental health services that meet the particular needs of students of color. Photo courtesy of The Steve Fund

They came together this summer virtually, with expertise pulled from public and private universities, finance and health care companies, the technology sector, mental health and other disciplines. Their mandate? To outline ways that higher education, along with a range of stakeholders, can promote the mental health and emotional wellbeing of young people of color and mitigate the mental health risks caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Steve Fund COVID-19 Task Force is one of several initiatives of The Steve Fund, the nation's leading organization focused on supporting the mental, social, and emotional health and well-being of young people of color. "Among communities of color, there has often been a stigma about accessing mental health services," explains Evan Rose, President of The Steve Fund's Board. "We were committed to ensuring a safe journey to adulthood for youth of color."

FJC is honored to have incubated The Steve Fund as it grew from its early days, when the organization was born of personal tragedy. The Fund is named for Stephen Rose, an African-American graduate of Harvard and City College, who died from mental illness in 2014. In the grief and shock following this tragic event, Mr. Rose's family was determined to help other young people to achieve mental and emotional wellness. They chose to do so by working with higher education institutions to better recognize the particular challenges faced by young adults of color, and design proactive strategies to support them.

"We have been on a journey with FJC," said Mr. Rose. "FJC made it easy and straightforward to get started, so that we could focus on our mission without worrying about the administrative details." The initiative started

with a Collective Giving Account at FJC, which raised over \$120,000 from 60 donors in its first year. As the ambitions of the initiative grew, the family started the organization under FJC's fiscal sponsorship and subsequently spun off into its own 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. The organization has grown significantly from its early days.

The task force is just one of many strategies The Steve Fund uses to drive long term culture change in colleges, universities and the organizations that support young people of color to pursue and succeed in higher education. The Steve Fund has held nine conferences on higher ed campuses—from CUNY to Stanford, provides mental health resources and expertise, and forges alliances across mental health professionals who provide culturally sensitive support to students from Black, Asian American, Latinx, Native American, Muslim and other ethnic groups. Their networks include historically Black colleges, community colleges, Ivy League universities like Harvard and Brown, and community based organizations .

"There are two crises plaguing America right now – coronavirus and racial injustice – and both are adding a perilous layer of stress and distress, especially for young people of color," says Sandra Timmons, Interim Executive Director at The Steve Fund. "Fostering resilience among young people of color caught in this current quagmire of the COVID-19 pandemic, associated devastation, and racial trauma warrants deliberate and intentional investments and support services across sectors that remove young people of color from harm's way."

For more information about the Task Force, see their [press release](#).

FJC Facilitates Donor Loan to Support Families Facing Domestic Violence

It took the collective efforts of a number of people to get it done: a committed donor, a philanthropic advisor, and the staff at FJC. All parties worked together this spring to close a \$100,000 cash flow loan to Brighter Tomorrows, a nonprofit working with victims of domestic violence to provide shelter, counseling and legal advocacy to New York's Suffolk and Nassau counties as well as New York City and the Tri-State area.

The process began with Sandy Wheeler, a longtime donor to Brighter Tomorrows. Over time, Ms. Wheeler developed a trusted relationship with Dolores Kordon, the organization's Executive Director, who often lamented the difficulties she faced running an organization that relied heavily on state contracts that were typically slow to pay. "It seemed like the chronic cash flow challenges of Brighter Tomorrow could be creatively addressed with philanthropy," said Ms. Wheeler.

The Wheelers spoke to their philanthropic advisor at a large financial institution, who made the introduction to FJC. "The Wheelers already had a Donor Advised Fund account, but the sponsor wasn't really set up to originate loans," their advisor explained. "We appreciated that FJC had the track record and infrastructure to make this proposed loan happen, and quickly."



Photo courtesy of Brighter Tomorrows

Within a few weeks, staff at FJC worked with the Wheelers to open and fund a new DAF account, review Brighter Tomorrow's financials, and prepare the legal documents with terms customized according to the Wheelers' wishes. Among other features, the loan carries no interest.

"Brighter Tomorrows is so grateful for this intervention by FJC and the Wheelers," says Ms. Kordon. "Particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, when cash was tight due to many competing programmatic demands, having the Wheeler's loan to bridge our day-to-day expenses provided us the flexibility to be responsive to the families we were serving, like distributing food cards and helping clients pay rent."

New Collaboration to Finance Cultural Heritage Sites

As the leader of the World Monuments Fund over three decades, Bonnie Burnham saw firsthand how cultural heritage sites around the globe stimulate local economies and strengthen communities. "Heritage sites, whether buildings, landscapes, or structures," explains Ms. Burnham, "have enormous cultural or historical value that with careful stewardship can be translated into economic value and job creation for a broad range of stakeholders." Unfortunately, many heritage sites exist in places that have limited public resources for their upkeep.

Enter the Cultural Heritage Finance Alliance (CHiFA), which brings together expertise in conservation, architecture, urban planning, business and finance to orchestrate long-term strategies that create revenue and economic sustainability for heritage assets while supporting a range of Sustainable



Photo courtesy of CHiFA

Development Goals. The goal of CHiFA is to raise loan capital from foundations and other mission-lenders to provide working capital loans that will catalyze significant public and private investment in these important places.

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New Collaboration to Finance Cultural Heritage Sites, cont

As Ms. Burnham and her team prepared for CHiFA’s formal launch, they realized they needed a strategic partner to manage the operations of their loan fund. Co-Founder Gary Hattem, formerly Head of Deutsche Bank’s Global Social Finance Group, made the introduction to FJC.

As CHiFA raises philanthropic loan capital to invest in sites globally, FJC’s role will be to manage the operations of aggregating and deploying these funds, including servicing for its international project loan fund. This arrangement will allow CHiFA to remain lean and focused on mission, with FJC leveraging its scaled operational platform to deliver back office support and ancillary services. FJC will also manage payments for most of CHiFA’s day to day expenses.

“This relationship will benefit us both,” said Bonnie Burnham, President of CHiFA. “For CHiFA, FJC brings the advantage of more than 25 years of

experience in loan servicing and financial management, which will give us, our partners and investors confidence that we will launch our initiative with a high degree of operational excellence. We hope this alliance with a foundation partner will accelerate cultural heritage as an emerging impact investing theme.”

“We are thrilled to collaborate with CHiFA to execute this unique and innovative international program,” said Sam Marks, Chief Executive Officer of FJC. “The revitalization of cultural sites has enormous potential impact, not just as a worthy goal on its own terms, but as an engine for economic development and job creation. As a sponsor of Donor Advised Funds with a long history of lending to the nonprofit sector, it’s exciting to apply our operational model to advance the goals of partners like CHiFA, where money meets mission.”

FJC Donors Join Forces to Battle Covid-19

FJC’s first-ever [Collective Giving Campaign](#), focused on addressing the Covid-19 pandemic, raised over \$147,000 for six outstanding organizations that are tackling the impacts of the pandemic in a range of ways: food security, employment, grassroots organizing, small business support, public health, and research and development. During the campaign period in May 2020, donor contributions were matched dollar-for-dollar by FJC’s Special Initiatives Fund.

Over 90 percent of participating donors who responded to a post-campaign survey found many compelling reasons to participate, such as the elevation of strong, effective organizations (many of which were new to them); the ability to align their resources with other donors at FJC; and the opportunity to have their gifts matched, effectively doubling their giving. As one donor said in her survey response, “Let’s do more work together!”

The Center for Effective Philanthropy published [a blog post by Sam Marks](#), CEO of FJC, with further reflections on the successes and challenges of the campaign. “The initiative suggests the power that DAF sponsors can bring when they provide focused guidance to rally disparate donors around a common cause,” he writes.

FJC also hosted a subsequent webinar highlighting the work of Food Bank for New York City, the top choice among FJC donors. Food Bank CEO Leslie Gordon spoke of the operational and logistical challenges of keeping food flowing where it has been needed most during the pandemic, and cautioned that the economic fallout of the crisis may create even greater need. “This is not a sprint, it’s a marathon.” See a summary and link to the full webinar recording [here](#).



Photo courtesy of Food Bank for New York City

Organization	FJC Donors	FJC Match	Total
Food Bank for NYC	\$42,942	\$42,942	\$85,884
iooby	\$8,380	\$8,380	\$16,760
National Domestic Workers Alliance	\$7,430	\$7,430	\$14,860
ACCION	\$5,030	\$5,030	\$10,060
Gates Philanthropy Partners	\$5,030	\$5,030	\$10,060
World Health Organization	\$5,030	\$5,030	\$10,060
TOTAL			\$147,684

Supporting Social Justice Through Giving Circles

By Laura Hoffman, Program Manager,
Fiscal Sponsorship Program

A nationwide wave of protests has generated an unprecedented number of donations to Black-led organizing groups, bail and mutual aid funds, and racial justice organizations. To inspire even more giving and to sustain giving over time, Amplifier, one of FJC's fiscally sponsored projects, has been focused on providing resources and tools to organizations and people to inspire them to give.

Since 2014, Amplifier has helped launch over 125 giving circles, creating a community of educated, empowered, values-driven givers. A giving circle is a group of people who pool their charitable donations and decide together how to allocate the combined funds. Amplifier has learned that givers are transformed by being part of a giving circle: they have more meaning and purpose in their giving; they understand how they can most influence and create change they want; and they build meaningful relationships with others. The giving circle platform amplifies the impact an individual can have with their giving.

“When it comes to issues like racial justice, our goal is to ensure that the vastness of the challenges don’t prevent people from taking action,” explained Amplifier’s CEO Liz Fisher. “We give people the connections and tools to do the research and choose on their own which organizations to support.”

To confront inequity within philanthropy, Amplifier is leveraging its role in the Jewish community to ignite and uplift racial justice giving and working closely with diverse giving circles and giving circle networks through the United States. As a member of the co-design team, Amplifier played a key role in founding [Philanthropy Together](#), a new initiative that diversifies philanthropy by developing leadership among giving circles led by people of color, women, LGBTQIA+ people, different giving capacities, youth, people in rural communities, religious minorities, and many, many more. Amplifier has also partnered with the Community Investment Network, a network of giving circles of particularly focused on strengthening African-American communities.



Photo by Arthur Edelman on Unsplash

Diversifying philanthropy is a key component to building a more equitable society, explains Fisher. “Giving circles tend to be local, focusing on recognized leadership in their communities,” she says. “As giving circles become more diverse, we believe that more resources will be directed toward organizations led by people of color that might have been overlooked by traditional philanthropy.”

As a participant in FJC’s Fiscal Sponsorship Program, Amplifier uses FJC’s 501(c)(3) status to collect tax-deductible contributions and foundation grants. Supporters have included the Natan Fund, the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Foundation, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, whose funding supported the building of the Philanthropy Together initiative.

For more information about giving circles, and opportunities to match fund giving circles led by people of color, please visit www.amplifiorgiving.org or email hello@amplifiorgiving.org.