AURORA EMPOWERS

Grantee Highlight

Angelica Soto, a recent graduate of the Aurora funded “Launch Your Leadership Journey” (LYLJ) program at Tunxis Community College, lit up the stage at Aurora’s Luminary Luncheon. Angelica explained how the LYLJ program equips students to lead for social change—teaching them skills like networking and project management—but also creating a community where they can gain confidence and be mentored. For Angelica, her relationship with her mentor Julie and the example of the facilitators who were candid about their experiences of gender bias, racial inequality and the demands of career and family convinced her that “If they could do it, so can I!” LYLJ has helped Angelica focus on her studies and chart her future to a career where she can share the lessons she’s learned with her community. Angelica shared her past personal experience of gun violence, gang intimidation, and working poverty. Those painful memories compel her to work to bring more of her community opportunities like those she found in LYLJ, “I’m focused on my future now, but that future leads me back to my past. Back to the community and city where I grew up.” Angelica’s dedication to giving back is inspiring. Her light and potential might have been lost to our community if she had not had the opportunity to work with Ann Gowdey and the fabulous mentors and facilitators of the LYLJ program. Thank YOU for supporting Angelica and helping her to shine.

AURORA EDUCATES

Through Our Research

Increasing access to quality educational opportunities for the women and girls in our community is vitally important to the well-being of our communities. Learn more about the educational obstacles and opportunities for women and girls in Greater Hartford by visiting aurorafoundation.org.

In Connecticut, Black girls are suspended or expelled at 5 TIMES the rate of their White counterparts

22% of women in Hartford County have a Bachelor’s Degree, while
15% of Black Women & 10% of Latina Women have Bachelor’s Degrees

A woman in Hartford County with a Bachelor’s degree earns an average of $50,380/year

17.9% of the Engineering degrees awarded in Hartford County went to women in recent years

It takes first-time, part-time female students an average of 6.4 years to complete an Associate’s degree in Connecticut

A woman in Hartford County without a high school diploma earns an average of $19,785/year
The 2019 Aurora Women’s Giving Circle learned about the needs of teen girls in our community and met with local non-profits working to serve them. We are pleased to announce that the recipient of the $5,500 grant award is the Hartford Public Library’s Strong Girls Camp, a 6-week summer program to be held at the Albany Avenue branch designed to allow 25 young women to identify social and emotional obstacles and find healthy ways to address them. The program will provide role models, field trips to cultural centers and colleges, crafting, video creation, meditation and yoga. We are proud to support these young women! We would love to have YOU join the Women’s Giving Circle in 2020! Meet like-minded women who want to provide more opportunities for women and girls, learn about non-profits in the community, and experience grantmaking from inside the process. To learn more visit aurorafoundation.org/givingcircle or call 860.881.4926

Women’s Work Screening and Panel

Aurora was pleased to partner with the Women’s Leadership Center at University of St. Joseph and CPTV to host a screening of the documentary Women’s Work and hear from panelists Heather Dawson, Executive Producer of Women’s Work; Marci Moreau, Entrepreneur, Naked Baking Ladies; Chief Ellen Murray, Fire Chief, Naugatuck Fire Department; and Janee Woods Weber, Director of Organizational Culture, William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund on their strategies for career success. Chief Murray admitted that she’d “rather be crawling around a burning building than on this stage,” but she wanted to “spend her energy to improve” on her self-confidence. Ms. Moreau pointed to the need for more funding for women entrepreneurs, but she remains hopeful, “I love the idea of women empowering other women. It is through those networks that we will make change.”

Special thanks to the Richard P. Garmany Fund at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving for providing support for Aurora’s public programming.

100 Men Campaign Kick-Off Breakfast

Aurora’s 100 Men Campaign Kickoff breakfast hosted a full house of male community leaders ready to join Team Aurora to support women and girls. Thanks to the leadership of the campaign Host Committee and especially Co-Chairs Eric George and Jim Ruel, the campaign is set to reach its ambitious goal of raising $30,000 by the end of 2019. The crowd was moved by Brianna Fraser, a student in the Aurora-funded “Women in STEM” program at Manchester Community College. Brianna shared how the experience of attending a conference panel featuring women who had attended community college and gone on to pursue PhDs in STEM fields helped her chart her academic aspirations to earn an ivy league PhD to study the effects of climate change on coral reefs. Would you like to help young women like Brianna “Win her Future?” Join Team Aurora at aurorafoundation.org/engage/100-men-100-days/

Make a difference and support women and girls in Greater Hartford

Two ways to give:

1. Mail your donation to:
   1678 Asylum Avenue, Lynch 216, West Hartford, CT 06117

2. Make your gift online at aurorafoundation.org/donate
Galvanize CT Statewide Summit for Women and Girls

Aurora is proud to partner with the United State of Women, the Connecticut Collective for Women and Girls, and the Governor’s Council on Women and Girls to bring Galvanize CT to East Hartford on December 7th. 450 women and girls will gather to hear from an inspiring combination of local and national experts at the forefront of the fight for gender equity. Highlights will include Valerie Jarrett, former Senior Advisor to President Obama, and in-depth training for participants on leadership, running for office, advocacy and organizing, advanced manufacturing and workforce development, entrepreneurship, and a special girls leadership training.

State of Women and Girls Data Dashboard

Coming soon! The State of Women and Girls Data Dashboard is a cutting-edge tool for sharing information and equipping small non-profits serving women and girls for the 21st century. Reliable information on the needs of women and girls is vital to addressing community needs through effective programming, advocacy, and resource allocation. An online, interactive tool, the Dashboard provides access to publicly available data that is specific to regional, city, and statewide levels and aggregated for gender and race. The data will allow for understanding local needs, as well as comparing trends across regions and the state. Aurora has partnered with the women’s funds at the Fairfield Community Foundation, Middlesex Community Foundation, and Mainstreet Foundation, as well as the Connecticut Data Collaborative and the Connecticut Women’s Education and Legal Fund to fund and implement the project.

REPORT FROM YOUR ROVING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:
Women Funded 2019 in San Francisco

Aurora’s Executive Director, Jenny Steadman attended the Women’s Funding Network biennial conference, Women Funded 2019, in San Francisco in September. She had this to say about the inspiring experience: “After spending 3 days at a gathering of women’s funds from every corner of the globe, I found so many connections to our work here at home. With so many of these sister funds we share a focus on education as a strategy for economic opportunity and gender equality. As we act locally, we are linked to efforts around the world building justice for women and girls, their families, their communities, and the world. By supporting Aurora, you are part of that global movement, too. Every opportunity we offer women and girls in our back yard is connected out to that world-wide effort—an important piece of changing the world!” Jenny presented on the State of Women and Girls Data Dashboard with Michelle Rierdon-Nold from Connecticut Data Collaborative to a packed conference session with special guest Carle Mowell, former Aurora board member.
On November 1st, 500 community luminaries celebrated the power of philanthropy for women and girls and raised funds for Aurora’s grantmaking for women’s college success. Francine Austin, Aurora’s 2019 Philanthropist of the Year, shared that her dedication to her community was rooted in the model of her family and the Black community. She was grateful to the “pushers and pullers” in her life who have encouraged her to keep reaching forward, while never forgetting to reach back and help those coming behind her. Aurora’s 2019 Young Philanthropist of the Year, Sanmati Choudhary said that her work to make Science, Technology, Engineering and Math accessible to all genders and races was sparked by her experience being silenced as the only woman in her high school computer science class.

Philanthropists Sarah Ackels and Nina Faynshtayn shared short videos showcasing incredible work to fight hunger and assist Ukrainian refugees. Keynote speaker Minda Harts shared her experiences as a woman of color in the workplace, offering a discussion of how microaggressions, tokenism and marginalization derail careers and how women of color and allies can “pool their power” and “build their own tables and claim their seats.” Jenny Steadman announced that 1,000 women will have participated in an Aurora-funded college success program by the end of this academic year. Aurora’s college programs are so successful they are being replicated at multiple campuses—a sign of the quality of programming and the impact your support of Aurora is having on women’s education across our region. As the donation thermometer rose, Jenny was thrilled to share that thanks to YOUR generous support of Aurora, our grant making will reach one million dollars in 2020. We can’t thank everyone at the luncheon and the constellation of Aurora supporters and donors enough—you are truly luminaries lighting the way for women and girls!