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Betty Kwan Chinn survived homelessness as a child in China. After immigrating to the United States, she has devoted her life to helping others in need. **Meet Betty and other Great Immigrants in our new comic series on page 14.**

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Chuan Ming Ong is a Dutch illustrator whose illustrations have appeared in publications including the *New Yorker*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and *Nikkei Asia*.

REBUILDING THE FORCES OF SOCIAL COHESION IN AMERICAN SOCIETY

At state, city, and community levels, remarkable individuals are coming together to tackle problems in innovative and creative ways. Carnegie Corporation of New York is working to recognize and support these local leaders and initiatives

By **Dame Louise Richardson**

Growing up in an Irish seaside town with a population of 3,000, I took a sense of community for granted. At the time I was more aware of the downsides. You knew everyone and they knew you, or knew who you belonged to. You could never do anything without your parents finding out about it faster than you could concoct an explanation. On my first day in secondary school, I remember being introduced to a nun who had taught both my mother and my grandmother. At the time I found it somewhat suffocating. Looking back, I see the layers of unspoken mutual support, the extra bread and cakes made for a neighbor, the extra children staying for meals, the extra people in the car for any long journey. Then there were the funerals. Whenever there was a funeral in our family, and there were too many, the house

filled with tens and tens of people, all of them ate and drank their fill, but we never provided the food or drink. Instead, neighbors quietly came into the kitchen with soups, stews, breads, cakes, and of course the inevitable whiskey, and set about serving the visitors. In the days and weeks that followed, people would stop by to collect their pots and pans. They would dismiss my attempts to thank them by saying, “Sure, didn’t your mother do the same for me many times over?” We had two local newspapers, based in the nearest city, that provided coverage of local sports and social events — I don’t remember there being any crimes to cover — as well as coverage of the activities of the city and county councils. In short, there was an abundance of what the acclaimed social scientist and my former teacher, Bob Putnam, has called “social capital.”



In this issue of the *Reporter*, we are focusing on the role of local leaders and the importance of local communities in strengthening our democracy at a time of growing polarization. Having lived outside the U.S. for 14 years, I have been shaken by the acceleration of political polarization here and the way that politics is replacing policy with performance. We've seen polarization elsewhere too, of course, but given the role of the United States in the world, the polarization here can have both national and global ramifications. The federal government becomes daily more dysfunctional but at the state, city, and local levels Americans are working together in innovative and creative ways. We at Carnegie Corporation of New York are working to identify and support these local leaders as they endeavor to rebuild the forces of social cohesion in our society. In the pages that follow, you will read about some of these remarkable women and men and the work that they are doing.

Libraries are in the Corporation's DNA. Andrew Carnegie built over 2,500 libraries all over the world and almost 1,700 in the U.S. alone to provide what he referred to as a "ladder" for people like himself with no access to education. Today we seek to strengthen our links to libraries as they provide invaluable support for those seeking access to books, a quiet and safe place to work, and information about their rights and public services. In "The Secret Life of Librarians" you will read about 10 remarkable librarians selected from over 1,400 community-based nominations for the annual I Love My Librarian Award. In July, we are again highlighting Great Immigrants, including in a new comic series that you will find in this magazine that focuses on the contributions that immigrants have made to their local communities.

Educators are also key contributors to their local communities. Carnegie's Profiles in Collective Leadership initiative sought to identify innovative and effective local partnerships between educators, local governments, and businesses to enhance the educational and career prospects of their students. Ten finalists across eight states were selected for awards and will receive support in spreading the lessons learned from their experiences to other communities. Educators too are helping to address the crisis of polarization by reemphasizing the teaching of civics in their schools as evidence mounts of popular ignorance of the structures and mechanisms of American government. We are also supporting teachers as they seek to teach media literacy to students who are exposed to a barrage of unfiltered and inaccurate information. We have recast our Education portfolio to focus on education for economic and social mobility and education for civic engagement in our efforts to address the deep inequities that persist in our educational system and the deep polarization that has emerged in our society.


The coarsening of political discourse in our Congress and on our campuses is deeply disconcerting. Governors Spencer Cox and Wes Moore, in conversation with Judy Woodruff, show us another way. Rather than articulate their differences, they seek to identify those areas on which they agree and build on them. Both Governors Cox and Moore also share a belief in the power of community service to provide opportunities for meaningful interactions across race, region, and class as well as to inculcate in participants a sense of commitment to their community. Carnegie is delighted to support these and other community service initiatives across the country.

We are also delighted to join with other funders in the Press Forward initiative designed to revitalize local journalism through the infusion of over \$500 million. The number of newspapers in the U.S. has declined by one-third, and the number of newspaper reporters declined by two-thirds since 2005. Our board member Martin Baron, former editor of the *Washington Post*, eloquently makes the case that without an independent press there can be no democracy. He also spells out the responsibilities of the press if they are to continue to hold power to account.

In adopting the lens of polarization to look at our grantmaking, we have sought to mine academia for ideas about how to understand the phenomenon and ultimately how we might mitigate it. We relaunched the Andrew Carnegie Fellows Program this year with a focus on political polarization in the U.S. We intend to continue this focus for a minimum of three years. We received over 360 nominations from institutions across the country and have funded 28 academics for two years. They represent junior and senior scholars from public and private institutions across the country and we hope to learn a great deal from their work.

It goes without saying that adopting a local perspective on the problem of polarization is not the only way to address the issue. Nevertheless, I hope that in reading these pages you will feel, as I do, some sense of optimism that there are so many smart, creative, compassionate Americans working hard to heal the rifts in our society and to build a stronger democracy. We at Carnegie are honored to be able to support their work. ■

Dame Louise Richardson is president of Carnegie Corporation of New York. A widely recognized expert on terrorism and international relations, she previously served as vice-chancellor of the University of Oxford and of the University of St. Andrews, and as executive dean of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study.



In adopting the lens of polarization to look at our grantmaking, we have sought to mine academia for ideas about how to understand the phenomenon and ultimately how we might mitigate it.

— **Dame Louise Richardson**

President, Carnegie Corporation of New York

HOW TO DISAGREE BETTER

Judy Woodruff moderates a conversation with Spencer J. Cox, governor of Utah (R), and Wes Moore, governor of Maryland (D), about how to depolarize our country, the role that national service can play, and how to disagree better

Illustrations by **Chloe Cushman**

Judy Woodruff: The reason this conversation has come about, in large part, is because of the National Governors Association meeting in Washington. Governor Cox, you are the chair of the Governors Association this year, and your initiative is called Disagree Better. I want to ask the two of you, what does that mean? Why disagree better right now?

Utah Governor Spencer J. Cox: We had this realization that we can't accomplish or solve the biggest problems facing our nation today if we all hate each other. And so when we looked at what we felt was the single-most pressing problem in our country, it is the contempt that we feel for our fellow Americans. This isn't just

another civility initiative, it's not just about being nice to each other, although we desperately need more of that. It is relearning how to disagree the right way, how to have debate, how to stay true to your principles, your core values, without demeaning and tearing apart the other side, and in so doing, actually find where there is common ground, where we can meet each other to solve problems. So that was the idea behind this initiative, and we had no idea how it would be received. But there is an exhausted majority out there, and it has been very well received.

Woodruff: Governor Moore, why did you want to be part of this?



From left to right: Spencer Cox, governor of Utah (R), and Wes Moore, governor of Maryland (D), are interviewed by Judy Woodruff, senior correspondent of PBS NewsHour, at an event held at the Economic Club of Washington, D.C. This article is an edited transcript of their conversation. CREDIT: THE ECONOMIC CLUB OF WASHINGTON, D.C./GARY CAMERON

Maryland Governor Wes Moore: You know, I just — I believe deeply that you can't claim to love the country if you hate half of the people in it.

Cox: Amen.

Moore: I don't come from a political family. I don't come from a political background. I was a combat veteran with the 82nd Airborne. I ran a small business in Maryland, and then I ran one of the largest poverty-fighting organizations in this country.

The idea that we're supposed to hate somebody because of their political affiliation is not something that I understand. And so I believe deeply that if we're actually going to get stuff done, that means understanding and getting back to the basic humanity of what it is we're trying to accomplish and keeping that as a north star.

Woodruff: Governor Cox, what do you think is at the bottom of this polarization, this polarized time we are living in? What do you think is the cause of it?

Cox: I could spend all afternoon on this but let me try to be concise here. A few decades ago, maybe in the early '90s, we started to see that division happening in Congress. And certain politicians have figured out how to

take advantage of dividing us to help themselves, using fear and anger. It's very motivating.

And then the Internet and social media, which were supposed to bring us all together, have done the exact opposite at a time when, as Americans, we are losing community, and we're losing the institutions that have historically brought us together. We are less religious than ever before, and all these community institutions that brought us together to take care of each other, they're all falling apart. And so we're lonely. We're wired for connection, we're desperate, and now we don't have it, so we're finding it in unhealthy places. And, you know, if I don't have any real friends, at least I can — we can hate the same people together on Facebook, right? That's where we are and what we're doing now.

And I want to go back to something that Wes said: this idea that there is nothing more un-American than hating our fellow Americans, right? We never defined ourselves by our political parties growing up. I didn't know who the Republicans were in my town, who the Democrats were in my congregation. I did not know that. That was like the 20th or 30th thing you would know. We were Americans first — Utahns, Utah Jazz fans, you know, Patriots fans, Jets fans, whatever.



We need to recognize our differences instead of dehumanizing and attacking.

— **Spencer Cox**, Governor of Utah (R)

Woodruff: Right.

Cox: We were dads, we were Mormons, or Catholics, or . . . political party was so far down the list, and now it's the first thing. It's the first thing most people define themselves as. That is crazy and so unhealthy in a pluralistic society like ours. If that's how we see ourselves first and foremost, we're sincerely in trouble. The pandemic made things even worse. We're more divided, and we've got to get back to redefining ourselves.

Woodruff: Governor Moore, from where you sit — you've been in office 13 months — what do you see? What is going on that's driving this harsh partisanship?

Moore: I think a lot of what's going on is that people are just opting out. They are opting into their own social corners. They are opting into listening to news — not to be educated, but to be validated. They are opting out of having a measure of societal connection.

One of the first things we pushed and got done in our first 90 days is that Maryland is now the first state in this country that has a service-year option for all of our high school graduates. They can serve seniors, they can serve young people, they can serve veterans, they can serve returning citizens, the environment — completely their choice.

Service is sticky. Those who serve together generally stay together. I know I saw that with people I served with in Afghanistan who came and campaigned for me when I was running for governor. Many of them were not

Marylanders. Many of them were not Democrats, but they literally came and knocked on doors on my behalf saying, "Let me tell you about the guy I served with."

I believe in this time of political divisiveness and political vitriol that service will save us, and that's why we want to make our state the state that serves. We believe that's a core way of being able to heal these divides because if we're a state that gets to know each other again, we're going to be a state that's willing to compete together and we'll be ready to win.

Cox: We've got the incentive structure all wrong now in America. We're elevating the loudest voices in the room, and politics is now full of performers, not people who want to solve a problem.

But governors still have to do stuff. Potholes are not partisan. In my more lucid moments, I get rid of the traditional right-left framing and I look at builders and destroyers because there are builders on the right and the left and in the middle, and there are destroyers on the right and the left — and probably some in the middle. Who are the people that are building, who are trying to create something? It's so easy to tear down. And now we have a Congress full of people who are good at tearing things down but terrible at building anything.

Woodruff: As we know, there has been an unprecedented surge of migrants coming across the southern border. We now have Republicans saying that the border is out of control. They have turned it into a huge issue. Is that criticism accurate?

Moore: Yes, very accurate. It's very accurate because it's the governors who end up taking on the responsibility of making sure that people are safe, and housed, and clothed, et cetera, and without enough supports and without enough policy that can really help to come up with a long-term solution.

Woodruff: I want to raise a couple of very difficult issues, like abortion. What would be an example of a civil, productive discussion and debate about abortion?

Cox: So I think there are a couple ways this could go, right? One, we can debate when life starts and the value of life. Those debates have been going on for a long time. We know we're probably going to end up at a different place.

So are there some areas where we could find agreement? Could we focus on making abortion as rare as possible because most pro-abortion people also believe that abortion is not a great thing? Could we agree on sex

education or contraception availability? Could we do more to help single moms and babies? If we care about life, we should care about all life, not just life until it's born, right? And so, could we focus on those areas? Are there places for agreement? We know we're never going to agree on this piece, but could we agree on that piece? And I think that's an area for rational debate and rational problem-solving.

Woodruff: Governor Moore, what would you add on abortion? Is it possible to have, around that highly charged subject, a civil debate?

Moore: It is, because I think there's a difference between having a civil debate and saying that we're all going to come to the same conclusion. We might not come to the same conclusion.

My belief on abortion is that abortion and reproductive rights are health care. It's women's health care, and I'm not going to take away a woman's right to her health care. I also know that the ability to focus on things like education and prevention, those parts of reproductive health, also does mean making sure that women and girls are getting the education they need about family planning and that type of thing. I think that there is a way, even if we end up at a different point at the conclusion, that we can have a respectful debate and respectful disagreement without it turning vitriolic.

Woodruff: Here's another very difficult issue: guns, crime. Governor Moore, I'll start with you on this. What would a civil discussion, a productive discussion, look like on guns?

Moore: This is, again, a very challenging and a very personal issue for me. From the time I was 17 years old, when I joined the United States Army, I served with, trained with, and was deployed with paratroopers, and we spent most of our time being trained on weapons with multiple calibers. And I have seen firsthand how destructive they are. I've seen firsthand what they do to the human body. I grew up in neighborhoods where the idea of public safety was always a want and not a have.

There are just commonsense gun laws that you can put in place, as we've done in the state of Maryland. We're not about taking away firearms from people, but we are about making sure that people can and should feel safe in their own neighborhoods and can feel safe in their own communities.

Woodruff: What would that discussion, that debate look like to you, Governor Cox?



I believe in this time of political divisiveness and political vitriol that service will save us, and that's why we want to make our state the state that serves.

— **Wes Moore**, Governor of Maryland (D)

Cox: In Utah the debate would be a little different. My background is very different. I grew up in a rural community, a small town of 1,200 people. I grew up on a farm. I had a gun in my truck every day when I drove to school my sophomore, junior, senior year, as did all of my friends. That's the way I was raised. You were weird if you didn't have a shotgun in your truck when you went to school. Now you would never drive to school with a shotgun in your truck, right? That's crazy. I mean, I get that that's crazy.

We need to recognize our differences instead of dehumanizing and attacking. And I do think it's important and okay that the laws in Maryland are different from the laws in Utah. It's not just okay: that is how our country was founded. I think one of the problems that we've gotten ourselves into is this idea that in every state, we all have to have exactly the same laws.

Woodruff: Another issue that is getting a lot of attention, has become very hot and difficult: diversity, equity, and inclusion — or DEI. Governor Cox, you recently signed legislation restricting what state-supported schools can do. Talk about your thinking about that issue.

Cox: Sure.

Woodruff: And then I want to hear both of you have a discussion about DEI.

Cox: What we did in Utah was a little different than what's happened in some other states. I was looking for a more positive vision about what does this look like. I do not believe that government should discriminate on the basis of race, ever, at all, period. I take a very universalist approach. I am a student of Dr. King and the Civil Rights Movement, and I get the idea that a white person can't understand what someone of color has experienced. I don't know what that's like. But I do believe in a universalism that we are all humans first, and that I can understand what it means to be sad or hurt or attacked unjustly, and I think that's very important.

The more we divide ourselves into groups, the worse off we're going to be. I think that it is incredibly problematic for the government to be engaged in discrimination on the basis of race — to elevate certain races or certain ethnic groups or certain sexualities that have been oppressed in the past. That's why I pushed back.

And so what we did in Utah was we said, government can't discriminate. We can't require you to submit a statement pledging allegiance to DEI to get hired or to advance. But we did not defund DEI. We said we're going to use DEI to help people who are struggling. We should be looking at first-generation college students. We should be looking to help anybody who's struggling toward completing a college degree. We should be looking at those who come from poverty and don't have the same opportunities as other people. That's going to disproportionately help minorities in the state of Utah, but it's not going to discriminate distinctly on the basis of skin color.

Woodruff: Governor Moore, how do you see this issue? How do you express your own views, which I assume have some differences with Governor Cox's?

Moore: I think there is this really warped conflation of what we mean by DEI, and there is a politicization of this idea of simply asking everyone to be acknowledged for who they are, their family history, their family lineage. We want a society that actually looks like the beautiful mosaic of the places that we call home — and so we are focusing on inclusion, focusing on making sure that we have an administration that looks like the state. I also don't believe that the role of government is telling people what they should and should not read, what books should and should not be in libraries, or telling people whose history is worth reading and understanding and whose history is not.

I believe — getting past the acronyms and past the politicization — that this is simply, are we willing to understand and acknowledge our own history? For people who say, well, the reason they're banning this may be because they don't want people to feel bad, that's not the reason. The reason that's happening is because if people don't understand their history, they don't understand their power. That's the reason I walk into every room I walk into with my head held high and my chest out, because I know my history.

Woodruff: There are governors who are part of the Governors Association who do believe that there should be restrictions on how history is taught.

Cox: I would say I'm not one of those. I just want to be very clear.

Moore: For those governors who are doing that — not Governor Cox — we have to, as a society, be honest about their motivation. It's not altruism. It's not because they don't want people to feel bad. There is something deeper as to why they don't want everybody to understand where they've come from and the journey that we all collectively have taken to make our society better.

Cox: Yes.

Woodruff: We are at the end of our time, but I want to close with a question to each of you: Where will we be on all of this in five years? Where are we headed, Governor Cox?

Cox: I am a natural optimist, and so I'm going to take that approach. I believe that pendulums always swing, and I think this pendulum will swing, too. I see some kind of green shoots of spring coming up. When we launched the Disagree Better initiative, I thought half the people would think I was crazy and the other half would be angry, and it's turned out to be a lot less than that. In fact, it's the exact opposite. We are finding allies. We are finding that there are groups all across the country that are deeply engaged in the work of depolarization. There are wonderful groups — More in Common, Braver Angels, I could name dozens of them — and they care deeply about this. The polling is showing us that Americans are desperate — there is a market failure right now in politics, a huge market failure, and neither party is taking advantage of it. Neither party is capitalizing on it, but somebody will at some point.

Woodruff: Governor Moore, where will we be in five years?

Moore: Well, we're going to be in a better place. I'm a student of history. I love history. And I go through this exercise sometimes when I'm having a tough day or things didn't go well or things don't look good, I spend time reading history because it adds a sense of context to everything.

We have to remember the historical contexts of the evolution of this country, of the evolution of our states. And I think if we do that and we're willing to do what those who came before us did, which is go do the work and not just simply give up or retreat, then I think we are guiding ourselves to a better place. Faith alone is not going to get us there. We have to understand our history and understand the trajectory we're on. We've got to do the work, and we've got to get to know each other. ■

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This article is an edited excerpt of a conversation organized and held at the Economic Club of Washington, D.C., on February 21, 2024. Reprinted with permission.

Governor Spencer J. Cox is Utah's 18th governor and served as the 2023–24 chair of the National Governors Association.

Governor Wes Moore is the 63rd governor of the state of Maryland. He is the first Black governor in Maryland's 246-year history and is the third African American elected governor in the history of the United States.

Judy Woodruff is a senior correspondent and the former anchor and managing editor of the PBS NewsHour. She has covered politics and other news for five decades at NBC, CNN, and PBS. Her most recent series, *Judy Woodruff Presents: America at a Crossroads*, which is supported by Carnegie Corporation of New York and other funders, is examining the many divisions fracturing the United States.

Carnegie Corporation of New York has provided support for **Disagree Better**, an initiative developed by the National Governors Association and Governor Spencer Cox to show Americans how political leaders can work through political differences to find solutions to divisive problems. Additionally, the foundation has announced \$3 million in philanthropic support for national service initiatives, including \$1.1 million for work underway in Utah.

STATES ARE MAKING IT EASIER TO SERVE LOCAL COMMUNITIES

States are offering incentives to strengthen America's volunteer tradition – the “golden thread” of U.S. democracy

Taking part in a national service program isn't just a great way to contribute to your community – it could also give a big boost to your education and career goals.

A growing list of states are launching new programs that include incentives – from tuition waivers to hiring preferences – to make national service an even more rewarding experience.

When the federal government gives states funding to develop local programs, it requires states to match that funding. This presents opportunities for governors to direct federal funds and develop state-level initiatives to increase volunteering in their states, as detailed in *State Innovations in National Service & Volunteering*, a report released in January by grantee More Perfect with support from Carnegie Corporation of New York.





It's also an effective way to address important local needs and bridge divides in communities. More Perfect is working to dramatically expand national service and volunteering in the United States over the next decade as part of an overarching movement to strengthen U.S. democracy and advance civic engagement in communities across the country.

Who volunteers and serves in the United States?

America's volunteer tradition has long been called the "golden thread" of our democracy: it brings together people of all backgrounds to solve problems and strengthen communities, while also reducing political polarization. In recent years, volunteers and service members have worked to improve educational outcomes, fight the opioid epidemic, confront the COVID-19 pandemic, respond to environmental disasters, help military veterans, aid refugees, and much more.

According to AmeriCorps' most recent Volunteering and Civic Life in America survey, conducted every two years, more than 60 million Americans volunteered for an organization between September 2020 and September 2021. Those volunteers served an estimated 4.1 billion hours, contributing an economic value of \$122.9 billion.

Which states are investing in new incentives for national service?

U.S. civilian national service programs date back to 1933, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt established the Civilian Conservation Corps to improve national parks and forests. In 1963, President John F. Kennedy originated the Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) program to tackle poverty and social needs. VISTA has since become part of AmeriCorps, which places around 200,000 members a year in service roles ranging from education to climate change.

AmeriCorps members typically commit to a one-year term, serving as part of a local organization. Members who complete a term of service may receive an education award, typically worth several thousand dollars, that can be used to pay for schooling costs. However, AmeriCorps' living allowances, which start at \$11 per hour, are often not enough to sustain volunteers on their own.

That's why additional programs and support from states are crucial for making service and civic engagement accessible to everyone.

In recent years, a bipartisan group of state legislators called the State Service Caucus has spearheaded new laws to reward people who serve their communities. These laws have created new programs like **Washington** state's Climate Corps Network and **Maryland's** Service Year Option, which pays recent high-school graduates to complete a year of public service.

Some states, like **Maryland** and **California**, have launched cabinet-level departments devoted to service. Other states are developing partnerships with colleges. The College for Social Innovation offers full academic credit at a growing number of colleges, including the University of Vermont, the University of New Hampshire, the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, and Delaware State University, in exchange for a semester of service.



To ease the burden of finding affordable housing for national volunteers, **Colorado, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Oregon, Washington, West Virginia,** and **Wisconsin** have piloted programs to match service members with affordable home sharing options. **Oregon** has also introduced legislation that would allow residents to rent an extra room to a service member without paying state taxes on the rental income.

Where does national service help pay for education?

Utah's One Utah Service Fellowship, signed into law in March 2024 by Governor Spencer Cox, provides select service members with up to \$8,500 toward educational expenses after completing an approved term of service. The Corporation recently supported this initiative with a \$1.1 million grant along with \$1.9 million for other state and national service programs.

California offers the California College Corps and the Civic Action Fellowship, which provide thousands of service members with education awards as high as \$10,000. California has also used state funding to increase AmeriCorps' education award to \$10,000 for members completing a year of full-time service in California.

In 2022, **West Virginia** passed a bipartisan bill that grants AmeriCorps members a full-year tuition waiver at a West Virginia public college or university for every year of service they complete in the state.

Virginia's Compact on National Service, launched in 2016, offers benefits like academic credit and admission preferences to students who complete a year of service.

Some states have enacted laws offering in-state public university tuition rates for people who complete national service in their states, including **Arizona** and **Maryland**. **Nebraska** extends in-state tuition eligibility to all alumni of AmeriCorps, regardless of the state where they served.

Typically, AmeriCorps alumni pay federal and state income tax on their education awards. In 2009, **Iowa** passed a bill to eliminate state taxes on the value of the award. Since then, the tax credit has saved thousands of Iowa AmeriCorps members an estimated \$1 million-plus in taxes.

Since the passage of Iowa's law, **Minnesota, Nebraska, Oregon,** and **Wisconsin** have also exempted the education award from state income tax.

Where can national service help your career?

In 2023, **Nevada** passed a law allowing anyone who completes at least 900 hours in a service program and meets qualifications to bypass the competitive hiring procedures for certain state jobs. The state governments of **Virginia, Montana,** and **Wisconsin** have also committed to hiring national service alumni. **California** now offers anyone who completes a term of service the opportunity to purchase retirement service credits in the state public retirement system. **Colorado** and **Maryland** have created paid service opportunities that provide job training and professional development.

In **Utah,** Governor Cox issued two executive orders in 2023 to demonstrate his state's commitment to service. One order encourages state agencies to organize department-wide service projects and give employees leave to participate. The other requires businesses that receive state economic development support to provide 20 hours of service per high-paying job for every year that it receives state support.

Through these strategies, states across the country are making national service a more accessible experience for millions of Americans and building a future where service can truly benefit everyone. ■

Chloe Cushman is a Toronto-based illustrator. She is a frequent contributor to the *New Yorker* and the *New York Times*, among many other international publications.



I would encourage anyone, no matter how big or how small, use your gift to benefit someone less fortunate than you who needs help from you.

— **Betty Kwan Chinn**

2023 Great Immigrant Honoree



THE COMIC SERIES

GREAT IMMIGRANTS ★ GREAT AMERICANS

Concept and Script by **Jongsma + O'Neill**
Illustrations by 王泉明 **Chuan Ming Ong**

Every Fourth of July, Carnegie Corporation of New York celebrates the exemplary contributions of immigrants to American life, as part of its focus on reducing political polarization and strengthening democracy. To highlight their stories, the foundation has commissioned a new comic series that illustrates how naturalized citizens are contributing to communities across the country. In the following pages, learn more about the inspiring stories of three of these Great Immigrants: Betty Kwan Chinn, Jean-Claude Brizard, and Maria Elena “Mel” Lagomasino, a trustee of the foundation since 2019.

Born in China, Chinn has served more than nine million meals since she began feeding individuals in need in her community in Eureka, California. Brizard, an immigrant whose family left Haiti to escape the repressive dictatorship of François Duvalier, has dedicated his life to transforming learning for all learners. Lagomasino, a Cuban immigrant whose family fled the country when Fidel Castro came to power, is a private wealth management pioneer who has helped others from losing everything.

As a child during Mao’s Cultural Revolution, Chinn was separated from her parents and became homeless for four years before immigrating to the United States. “Inside my heart, I don’t want anyone to suffer what I suffered,” Chinn says. “I would encourage anyone, no matter how big or how small, use your gift to benefit someone less fortunate than you who needs help from you.”

Learn more about the comic series at carnegie.org/immigrantstories. ■



Eline Jongsma and **Kel O'Neill** lead Jongsma + O'Neill, a nonfiction storytelling studio. They are Sundance fellows, Emmy nominees, and the creators of the immersive exhibition *Loot: 10 Stories*, which won the 2024 XR-History Award.

Chuan Ming Ong is a Dutch illustrator whose illustrations have appeared in publications including the *New Yorker*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and *Nikkei Asia*.



GREAT IMMIGRANTS

GREAT AMERICANS

FEATURING BETTY KWAN CHINN



CONCEPT AND SCRIPT BY JONGSMA + O'NEILL
ILLUSTRATED BY CHUAN MING ONG

Carnegie
LIBRARY OF ARTS

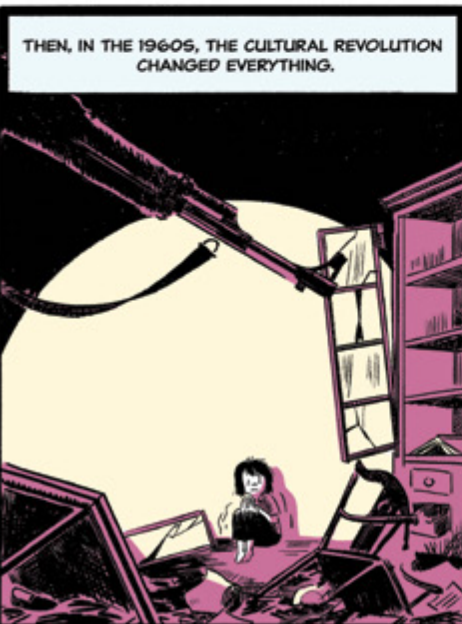
WHEN I SEE PEOPLE BAREFOOT, I ALWAYS GIVE THEM SOCKS AND SHOES.



LIKE WHEN I SEE THEM HUNGRY, I FEEL HUNGRY AND THAT'S WHY I FEED THEM.



MY MOTHER WAS AN OB DOCTOR IN CHINA. SHE TOOK IN RUNAWAYS AND ABUSED YOUNG WOMEN AND LET THEM LIVE IN OUR HOUSE, AND SHE CRUSADED AGAINST FOOTBINDING.



THEN, IN THE 1960S, THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION CHANGED EVERYTHING.

WE WERE THROWN OUT OF OUR HOUSE. THE RED GUARDS BROUGHT ME TO A GARBAGE DUMP. I LIVED BAREFOOT AND WORE ONLY ONE LAYER OF CLOTHING ALL YEAR ROUND FOR FOUR YEARS...



...UNTIL I ESCAPED, AND SWAM ACROSS THE BAY FROM CHINA TO HONG KONG AND FLEW TO THE U.S. TO STAY WITH MY SISTER.



"SAIL ON SILVER GIRL, SAIL ON BY, YOUR TIME HAS COME TO SHINE, ALL YOUR DREAMS ARE ON THEIR WAY, SEE HOW THEY SHINE. OH, IF YOU NEED A FRIEND I'M SAILING RIGHT BEHIND"



THE BIGGEST MEMORY FOR ME IS COMING OUT OF THE AIRCRAFT AND HEARING THE SONG "BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATER."



"WON'T YOU BE MY NEIGHBOR?"

I WAS ALWAYS BAREFOOT IN CHINA, BUT MR. ROGERS TAUGHT ME HOW TO PUT SHOES ON MY FEET.



LATER I GOT MARRIED, AND WORKED AT A SCHOOL IN EUREKA, CALIFORNIA.



WHAT'S IN YOUR LUNCH BOX?

MY SON'S FRIEND, A GIRL IN THE FIRST GRADE, KEPT ASKING MY SON FOR FOOD.



I FOUND OUT SHE AND HER FAMILY LIVED IN A CAR, SO I FED THEM.

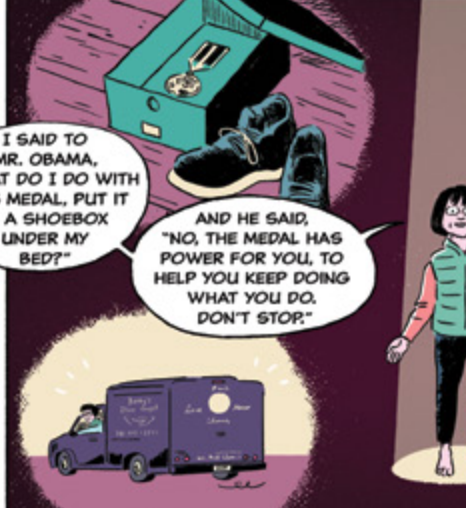


THEN I FOUND A WHOLE BUNCH OF VETERANS LIVING ON THE STREET, AND I FED THEM TOO. I WAS COOKING ALL THE TIME!

MY NEIGHBOR CALLED PRESIDENT OBAMA AND TOLD HIM ABOUT WHAT I WAS DOING HERE IN EUREKA.



SO HE GAVE ME THE PRESIDENTIAL CITIZENS MEDAL.



I SAID TO MR. OBAMA, "WHAT DO I DO WITH THIS MEDAL, PUT IT IN A SHOEBOX UNDER MY BED?"

AND HE SAID, "NO, THE MEDAL HAS POWER FOR YOU, TO HELP YOU KEEP DOING WHAT YOU DO. DON'T STOP."



SO I WON'T. AS LONG AS PEOPLE GO BAREFOOT, I'LL KEEP HELPING.

BETTY HAS SERVED MORE THAN NINE MILLION MEALS SINCE SHE BEGAN FEEDING HER COMMUNITY IN 1984. SHE HAS ALSO SUPPORTED EUREKA'S UNHOUSED POPULATION THROUGH THE BETTY KWAN CHINN DAY CENTER AND A SHORT-TERM HOUSING FACILITY. FIND MORE INSPIRING STORIES AT CARNEGIE.ORG/IMMIGRANTSTORIES

* 23.3% OF HEALTH CARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE WORKERS ARE IMMIGRANT WOMEN. SOURCE: A SNAPSHOT OF IMMIGRANT WOMEN IN THE UNITED STATES, AMERICAN IMMIGRATION COUNCIL, JUNE 2023

GREAT IMMIGRANTS ★ GREAT AMERICANS

FEATURING JEAN-CLAUDE BRIZARD

CONCEPT AND SCRIPT BY JONGEMA + O'NEILL
ILLUSTRATED BY CHUAN MING ONG

MY FIRST FLIGHT WAS IN 1976 WHEN I WAS TWELVE YEARS OLD, AND IT TOOK ME FROM HAITI TO NEW YORK.

I COULDN'T WAIT TO FINALLY BE REUNITED WITH MY PARENTS, WHO'D FLED THE DICTATORSHIP FOUR YEARS EARLIER.

BUT GOING OUT THE AUTOMATIC DOORS AT JFK, THE COLD AND THE NOISE HIT ME SO HARD THAT I RAN BACK INSIDE.

I WALKED INTO THIS PLACE AND EVERYONE LOOKED LIKE ME - BLACK AND BROWN KIDS. THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS, MY STUDENTS SURROUNDED ME.

YOU MAY GET ME, BUT I'M GOING TO GET AT LEAST ONE OF YOU. WHO'S IT GOING TO BE IT?

IT WAS A TEST TO SEE IF I WAS SCARED OF THEM. AFTER THAT, I KNEW WHO I WAS TEACHING, AND THEY WERE MUCH NICER TO ME.

ABOUT A DECADE LATER, I NEEDED A JOB AND NEW YORK CITY WAS DESPERATE FOR TEACHERS. I WAS SENT TO RIKERS ISLAND TO TEACH PRISONERS.*

THE ONE KID WHO DIDN'T STAND UP THAT FIRST DAY TURNED OUT TO BE BRILLIANT.

BUT IT WASN'T A PLACE I WANTED TO BE. I WORE A TIE EVERY DAY AND GREW A BEARD BECAUSE I WAS AFRAID I WAS GOING TO BE CONFUSED WITH THE INMATES AT RIKERS.

TOWARD THE END OF THE SEMESTER, I WAS DONE. I TOLD THAT KID, "LOOK, YOU BROUGHT ME JOY IN THIS PLACE. WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?"

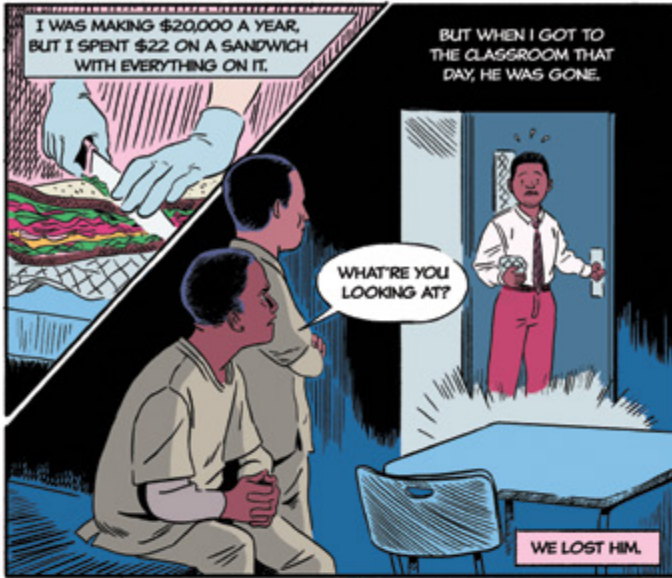
WHAT DO YOU CALL THIS AGAIN?

ALGEBRA.

ALGEBRA'S EASY.

HOW ABOUT A SANDWICH?

* IN THE U.S., 9.6% OF WORKERS IN K-12 AND 17.4% OF WORKERS IN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES WERE BORN OUTSIDE OF THE UNITED STATES. SOURCE: IMMIGRANTS AND THE U.S. EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM, AMERICAN IMMIGRATION COUNCIL, AUGUST 2021



I WAS MAKING \$20,000 A YEAR, BUT I SPENT \$22 ON A SANDWICH WITH EVERYTHING ON IT.

BUT WHEN I GOT TO THE CLASSROOM THAT DAY, HE WAS GONE.

WHAT'RE YOU LOOKING AT?

WE LOST HIM.



THE U.S. MARSHALS TOOK HIM TO A MAXIMUM SECURITY FACILITY UPSTATE. THAT'S ALL I KNOW, AND ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW.

ONCE A KID'S IN PRISON, THERE'S ONLY SO MUCH YOU CAN DO. MY FOCUS SHIFTED TO THE FRONT END OF THE CHALLENGE. HOW COULD WE RESHAPE EDUCATION TO STOP THE FLOW OF KIDS INTO PLACES LIKE RIKERS?

ABOUT TWENTY YEARS AGO, TO CONQUER MY FEAR OF HEIGHTS, I GOT MY PILOT'S LICENSE. I WAS HOOKED IMMEDIATELY.



WHEN YOU'RE LOOKING DOWN FROM THERE, YOU DON'T GET CAUGHT UP IN THE MUCK.

AS A TEACHER IN THE CLASSROOM, I COULD IMPACT 30-35 KIDS. WHEN I BECAME A PRINCIPAL IN BROOKLYN, MAYBE 2000.

IN CHICAGO, AS CEO OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, I COULD TOUCH 400,000 LIVES.

THE SAME IS TRUE WITH EDUCATION.

YOU SEE THE WHOLE SYSTEM OF NATURE, AND OUR IMPACT ON IT.



IT'S LIKE ARCHIMEDES SAID: GIVE ME A LEVER LONG ENOUGH AND A FULCRUM TO PUT IT ON, AND I CAN MOVE THE WORLD.

NOW, IN MY CURRENT ROLE, I WORK ON EVERYTHING FROM GETTING K-12 STUDENTS ACCESS TO HIGH-SPEED INTERNET TO FIGURING OUT HOW TO HARNESS AI TO IMPROVE LEARNING.



THIS IS GLOBAL STUFF.



FOR FOUR DECADES, JEAN-CLAUDE BRIZARD HAS DEDICATED HIS LIFE TO EDUCATION. HE CURRENTLY SERVES AS PRESIDENT AND CEO OF DIGITAL PROMISE, A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION WORKING TO USE RESEARCH, PRACTICE, AND TECHNOLOGY TO TRANSFORM LEARNING FOR ALL LEARNERS.

READ MORE GREAT IMMIGRANT STORIES AT CARNEGIE.ORG/IMMIGRANTSTORIES.

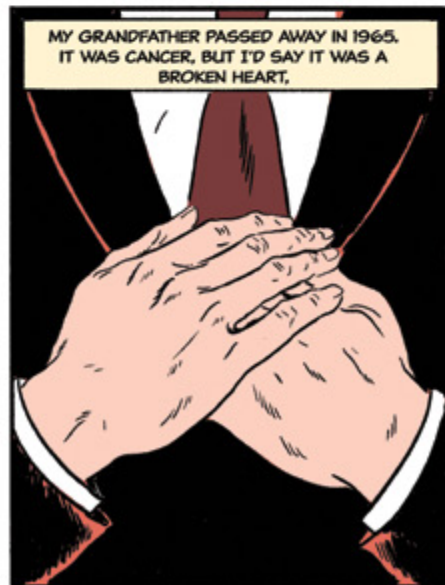
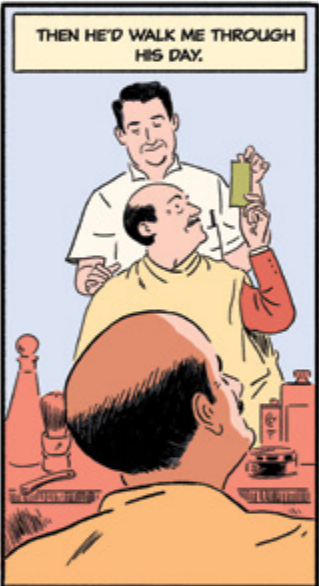
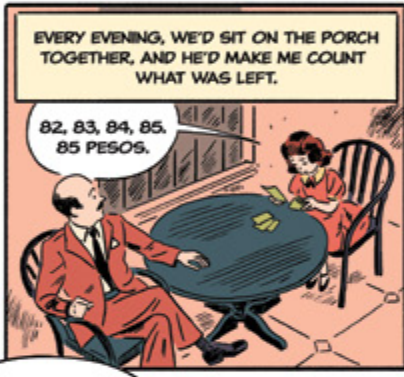
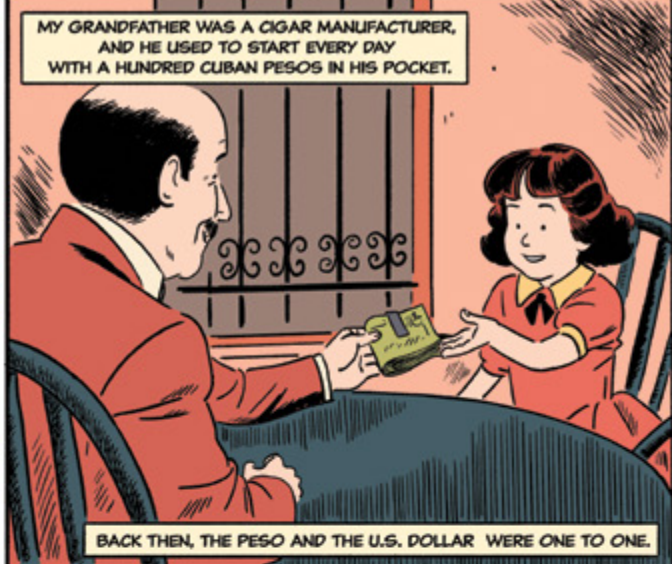
GREAT IMMIGRANTS GREAT AMERICANS

FEATURING MEL LAGOMASINO

HAVANA, 1958

GO AHEAD, COUNT IT.

CONCEPT AND SCRIPT BY JONOSMA + O'NEILL
ILLUSTRATED BY CHUAN MING ONG





I MOVED TO NEW YORK AND GOT A DEGREE IN FRENCH LITERATURE. I WANTED TO WRITE POETRY AND BE CREATIVE.



BUT WHEN I GRADUATED, I COULDN'T EVEN TYPE - I'D REFUSED TO LEARN HOW BECAUSE I THOUGHT IT WOULD FORCE ME TO BECOME SOMEONE ELSE'S SECRETARY.



I EVENTUALLY TOOK A CAREER APPTITUDE TEST, WHICH TOLD ME EXACTLY WHAT I DIDN'T WANT TO HEAR.

BUSINESS?!

BUT THEN I THOUGHT, WHY CAN'T BUSINESS BE CREATIVE?



AND IT'S TRUE
WALT DISNEY COMPANY
ANNUAL SHAREHOLDERS
MEETING
- 2024 -

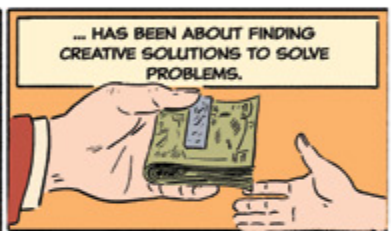
EVERYTHING I'VE DONE IN MY CAREER, FROM CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ...



TO BANKING AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT ...



TO COACHING THE NEXT GENERATION OF ENTREPRENEURS ...

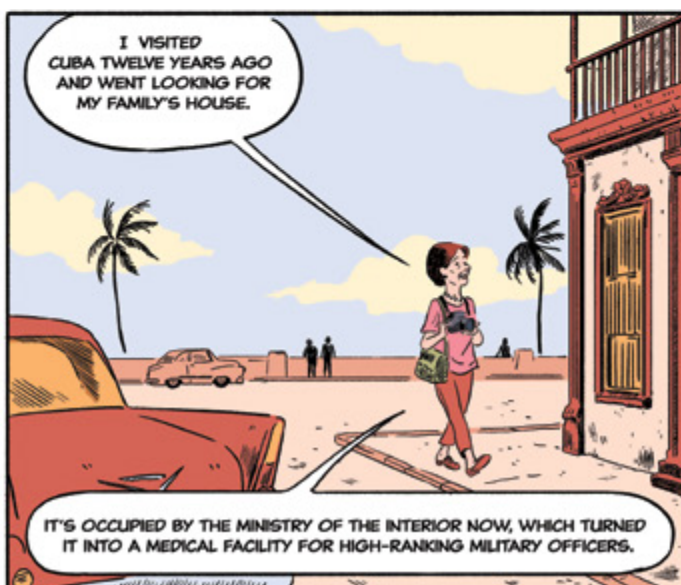


... HAS BEEN ABOUT FINDING CREATIVE SOLUTIONS TO SOLVE PROBLEMS.



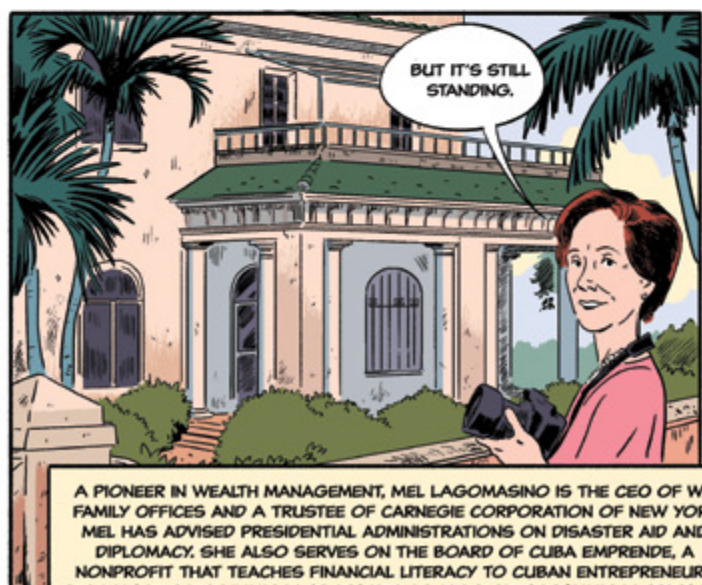
WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF MY FINANCIAL DECISIONS?

HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF AND OTHERS FROM LOSING EVERYTHING?



I VISITED CUBA TWELVE YEARS AGO AND WENT LOOKING FOR MY FAMILY'S HOUSE.

IT'S OCCUPIED BY THE MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR NOW, WHICH TURNED IT INTO A MEDICAL FACILITY FOR HIGH-RANKING MILITARY OFFICERS.



BUT IT'S STILL STANDING.

A PIONEER IN WEALTH MANAGEMENT, MEL LAGOMASINO IS THE CEO OF WE FAMILY OFFICES AND A TRUSTEE OF CARNEGIE CORPORATION OF NEW YORK. MEL HAS ADVISED PRESIDENTIAL ADMINISTRATIONS ON DISASTER AID AND DIPLOMACY. SHE ALSO SERVES ON THE BOARD OF CUBA EMPRENDE, A NONPROFIT THAT TEACHES FINANCIAL LITERACY TO CUBAN ENTREPRENEURS. READ MORE GREAT IMMIGRANT STORIES AT [CARNEGIE.ORG/IMMIGRANTSTORIES](https://carnegie.org/immigrantstories)

* FOREIGN-BORN WOMEN MAKE UP 6.4% OF THE FINANCE INDUSTRY IN THE U.S. SOURCE: A SNAPSHOT OF IMMIGRANT WOMEN IN THE UNITED STATES, AMERICAN IMMIGRATION COUNCIL, JUNE 2023

THE CASE FOR OBJECTIVE, INVESTIGATIVE, AND LOCAL JOURNALISM

The former editor of the *Washington Post* argues that without democracy, there will be no independent press, and without an independent press, there can be no democracy

By **Martin Baron**

Martin Baron, a trustee of Carnegie Corporation of New York since 2021, is a longtime journalist and newspaper editor. He ran the newsrooms of the *Miami Herald* and the *Boston Globe* before being named executive editor of the *Washington Post* in 2013. Baron retired from daily journalism in early 2021, after having led newsrooms to 18 Pulitzer Prizes. The following article is an edited excerpt from his first book, *Collision of Power: Trump, Bezos, and The Washington Post*, which chronicles the Post's groundbreaking and award-winning coverage amid the newspaper's new ownership by Jeff Bezos, the founder of Amazon, and the election of Donald Trump as president.

For the press to hold power to account today, we will have to commit to what constitutes our moral core. Responsible journalists should be guided by fundamental principles. Among them: We must support and defend democracy. Citizens have a right to self-governance. Without democracy, there will be no independent press, and without an independent press, there can be no democracy. We must work hard and honestly to discover the truth, and we should tell the public unflinchingly what we learn. We should support the right of all citizens to participate in the electoral process without impediment. We should endorse free speech and understand that vigorous debate over policy is essential to democracy. We should favor equitable treatment for everyone, under the law and out of moral obligation, and abundant opportunity for all to attain what they hope for

themselves and their families. We owe special attention to the least fortunate in our society, and have a duty to give voice to those who otherwise would not be heard. We must oppose intolerance and hate, and stand against violence, repression, and abuse of power.

But more belongs on our agenda. A few thoughts: We as a profession will need strong, principled, and innovative leadership. We will need to build and maintain institutions whose finances are as sturdy as our values, with the capacity to ensure our commercial future and withstand the persistent, malevolent attacks against us. We must devote far more resources to legal strategy, regularly seeking access to documents that those in power seek to hide, and should more aggressively defend our reputations in court, finally going on the offensive against those who defame us. We must invest far more resources in investigative reporting and acquire new tools that can help us do that work more effectively.

At all times, we will have to hold fast to standards that demonstrate that we are practicing our craft honorably, thoroughly, fairly, with an open mind and with a reverence for evidence over our own opinions. In short, we should practice objective journalism.

In championing “objectivity” in our work, I am swimming against what has become, lamentably, a mighty tide in my



Martin Baron, a trustee of Carnegie Corporation of New York and the former editor of the *Washington Post*, writes that journalists “should not start our work by imagining we have the answers; we need to seek them out.” CREDIT: MARVIN JOSEPH/THE WASHINGTON POST VIA GETTY IMAGES

profession. No word seems more unpopular today among mainstream journalists.

The principle of objectivity has been under siege for years, but perhaps never more ferociously than during Trump's presidency and its aftermath. Several primary arguments are leveled against it by my fellow journalists: None of us can honestly claim to be objective, and we shouldn't profess to be. We all have our opinions. Objectivity also is seen as just another word for neutrality, balance, and so-called both-sidesism or "on the one hand, on the other hand" journalism. It pretends, according to this view, that all assertions deserve equal weight, even when the evidence shows they don't.

Finally, critics argue that objectivity historically excluded the perspectives of those who have long been among the most marginalized in society (and media): women, Black people, Latinos, Asian Americans, Indigenous Americans, the LGBTQ+ community, and others.

Genuine objectivity, however, does not mean any of that. This is what it really means: As journalists, we can never stop obsessing over how to get at the truth — or, to use a less lofty term, "objective reality." Doing that requires an open mind and rigorous method. We must be more impressed with what we don't know than with what we know, or think we know. We should not start our work by imagining we have the answers; we need to seek them out. We must be generous listeners and eager learners. We should be fair. And by that, I include being fair to the public: report directly and fearlessly what we find to be fact.

The idea of objective journalism has uncertain origins. But it can be traced to the early twentieth century in the aftermath of World War I, when democracy seemed imperiled and propaganda was developed into a polished instrument for manipulating public opinion and the press during warfare — and, in the United States, for deepening suspicions about marginalized people who were then widely regarded as not fully American.

Renowned journalist and thinker Walter Lippmann helped give currency to the term when he wrote *Liberty and the News*, published in 1920. In that slim volume, he described a time that sounds remarkably similar to the United States of today. "There is everywhere an increasingly angry disillusionment about the press, a growing sense of being baffled and misled," he wrote. The onslaught of news was "helter-skelter, in inconceivable confusion." The public suffered from "no rules of evidence." He worried over democratic institutions being pushed off their foundations by the media environment of his time.

Lippmann made no assumption that journalists could be freed of their own opinions. He assumed, in fact, just the opposite: They were as subject to biases as anyone else. He proposed an "objective" method for moving beyond them: Journalists should pursue "as impartial an investigation of the facts as is humanly possible."

Journalists routinely expect objectivity from others. Like everyone else, we want objective judges. We want objective juries. We want frontline police officers to be objective when they make arrests and detectives to be objective in assessing evidence. We want prosecutors to evaluate cases objectively, with no prejudice or preexisting agendas. Without objectivity, there can be no equity in law enforcement, as abhorrent abuses have demonstrated all too often.

We want doctors to be objective in diagnosing the medical conditions of their patients, uncontaminated by bigotry or baseless hunches. We want medical researchers and regulators to be objective in determining whether new drugs might work and can be safely consumed. We want scientists to be objective in evaluating the impact of chemicals in the soil, air, and water. Objectivity among science and medical professionals is at the very heart of our faith in the food we eat, the water we drink, the air we breathe, and the medicines we take.

In business, we want objectivity, too. Applicants for bank loans and credit cards should be evaluated on valid criteria, not on biases about race or ethnicity or other factors that are similarly irrelevant.

Objectivity in all these fields, and others, gets no argument from journalists. We accept it, even insist on it by seeking to expose transgressions. Journalists should insist on it for ourselves as well. The public expects that of us. It has every right to. If we hope to effectively hold the powerful to account, we will have to show that we are objective in how we go about our work.

The lightning-fast spread of misinformation, disinformation, and crackpot conspiracy theories of today makes the pursuit of truth more essential, and more difficult. Efforts to deceive are more numerous and sophisticated, resources dedicated to deception more abundant. The field of journalism must respond by becoming more investigative in nature.

Investigative reporting has been a ripe target for cost-cutting in an industry where resources are scarce. It is expensive, takes a lot of time, cannot guarantee results (or even a story), and may not quicken the digital traffic that is prized currency in the Internet era. When journalists abdicate their role as watchdogs, however, unscrupulous behavior is encouraged. Readers have demonstrated, with the purchase of subscriptions, that they want wrongdoing brought to light.



Martin Baron addresses the *Boston Globe* newsroom in November 2012. Baron was editor of the *Globe* for 11 years, during which the paper won six Pulitzer prizes, before he joined the *Washington Post* as executive editor in January 2013. CREDIT: YOON S. BYUN/THE BOSTON GLOBE VIA GETTY IMAGES

News organizations will need adequate staff, greater technical prowess, and state-of-the-art technological tools to penetrate the dark arts now increasingly deployed to instantly spread lies and baseless suspicions with the aim of political and commercial gain. They will have to collaborate more effectively among themselves and with independent specialists who possess expertise in artificial intelligence and the manipulation of social networks. Fabrications of every sort, including visual images, inevitably will become more frequent, dangerous, and challenging to detect and disprove.

While investigative reporting is thriving in some corners of journalism, particularly at the national level, it is being starved to death in others. Local news outlets continue to see their primary sources of revenue dry up, leaving them poorly resourced to fund ambitious journalism of any type. Too many local newspapers have been taken over by private equity firms and hedge funds. Those owners seem determined to milk their properties for every last penny they can cough up, without regard for the public interest. Investigative journalism at the local level is threatened anew.

The future of local investigative reporting may depend heavily on whether new journalism nonprofits receive adequate support from readers and philanthropists as well as on collaborations between national news organizations and local ones. The national investigative nonprofit ProPublica has established investigative reporting hubs around the country and joined forces with local newsrooms on accountability journalism, with

impressive results. The *New York Times* announced in April 2022 that its former top editor, Dean Baquet, would head a fellowship program to promote local investigative reporting, with projects offered without charge to local print, digital, and broadcast outlets.

“The decline of local investigative reporting is a national tragedy,” *New York Times* publisher A. G. Sulzberger aptly put it at the time. “It means that fewer and fewer people across the country have access to essential information about their communities — too often there is no one to track school board meetings; comb through court documents; or reveal the significance of everyday developments in towns, cities, and states. No watchdog to keep local governments honest. . . . As a result, it’s almost certain that corruption, injustice, and wrongdoing go unnoticed.” ■



Martin Baron is a longtime journalist and newspaper editor. He ran the newsrooms of the *Miami Herald* and the *Boston Globe* before taking over the *Washington Post* in 2013. His role in launching an investigation of the Catholic Church’s cover-up of sexual abuse by clergy was portrayed in the Academy Award-winning movie *Spotlight*. He retired from daily journalism in early 2021 and now splits his time between western Massachusetts and New York City. *Collision of Power* is his first book.

From *Collision of Power: Trump, Bezos, and The Washington Post* by Martin Baron. Copyright © 2023 by the author and reprinted by permission of Flatiron Books.

DOES LOCAL NEWS REDUCE POLARIZATION?

More than half of American counties are without access or have very limited access to local news. Political scientist and Andrew Carnegie Fellow Joshua P. Darr has been studying what the loss of local news means for American communities

By Joshua P. Darr

Joshua P. Darr, a political scientist at Syracuse University and a 2022 Andrew Carnegie Fellow, shares what he's learned from his ongoing research into the relationship between local news and polarization, what publications can do to earn back trust, and why — despite the news industry's struggle for survival — he sees signs of hope.



NEARLY 3,000 LOCAL NEWSROOMS HAVE CLOSED NATIONWIDE SINCE 2005, ACCORDING TO A 2023 NORTHWESTERN/MEDILL REPORT. WHY ARE WE SEEING THIS DECLINE?

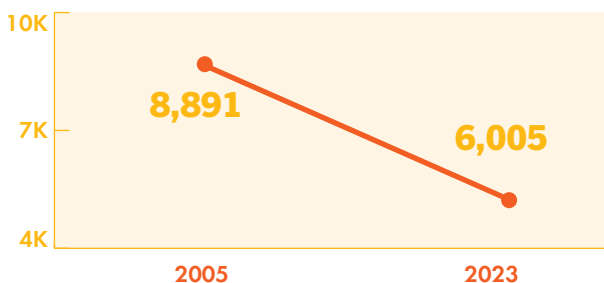
Local newsrooms are in this existential crisis for many reasons.

Print ads traditionally made up around 80 percent of newspaper revenues until platforms like Craigslist gutted classified ads, digital ads replaced printed ones at much lower profit margins, and Facebook and Google started scooping up 70 percent of those smaller revenues. As newspaper profits tanked, chain owners and hedge funds started buying them up and cutting staff, sharing content between outlets, and generally making their news less informative and less local. Subscribers dwindled as the product worsened and readers found other free content online, forcing many newspapers to close.

Local news outlets that remain open face steep challenges. Many newspapers today are more accurately classified as “ghost newspapers,” existing in name only and failing to produce much original reporting. As staff declines, it becomes more difficult for metropolitan newspapers to cover individual neighborhoods, suburbs, or anything

NEWSPAPERS ARE VANISHING

Across the country, newspapers are disappearing at a rate of roughly two per week.



WHICH NEWSPAPERS REMAIN?

Out of 6,005 surviving newspapers, there are

4

NATIONAL NEWSPAPERS

150

METRO AND REGIONAL DAILIES

1,063

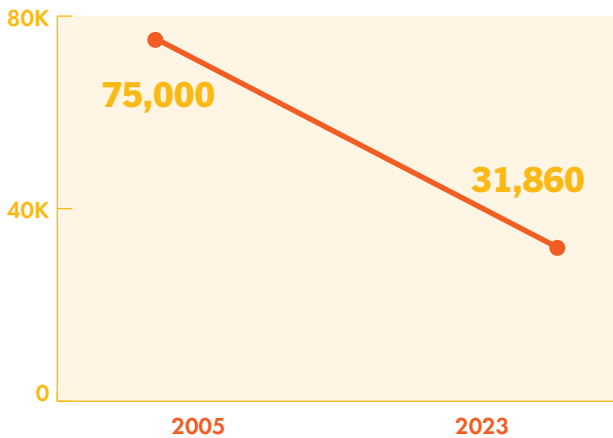
SMALL AND MIDSIZE DAILIES

4,792

WEEKLIES AND NON-DAILIES

JOURNALISM JOBS ARE DISAPPEARING

The country has lost almost two-thirds of its newspaper journalists since 2005.



TOTAL NEWSPAPER EMPLOYMENT

including marketing, production, and support roles

HAS DECREASED BY MORE THAN

70% ↓

OVER THE PAST 15 YEARS.

other than citywide issues effectively. More than half of newspapers are owned by a hedge fund focused on profit, not long-term sustainability or serving communities. These changes in technology, economics, and ownership have simply been too much for the industry to endure.

WHAT CONSEQUENCES DO COMMUNITIES WITHOUT LOCAL NEWS FACE?

The consequences are clear and wide-ranging. Political competition and representation are demonstrably weaker without local coverage: research shows that shrinking newsrooms lead to fewer candidates running for local offices, such as mayor or school board, which means incumbents are more likely to win and spend less money on campaigning. Politicians who represent areas with poorer local news coverage do not work as

hard in hearings and committee meetings, vote the party line more frequently, and bring back less funding to their districts. Scholars in economics, communications, and political science have shown that these declines in responsiveness go hand in hand with decreased civic engagement in these areas following local news decline: less political news about congressional elections leads to lower knowledge, participation, and turnout in those elections.

Americans share many common concerns with those that they disagree with ideologically and politically, and local news is far better than national news at showing us those common interests and identities — not only in the realm of politics, but also by covering arts and culture and high school sports, or even writing obituaries. It is much harder to see the world in stark shades of red and blue if you get your news from a local newspaper.

WHY DOES LESS LOCAL NEWS MEAN MORE POLARIZATION?

National politics is characterized by conflict between Democrats and Republicans, and the parties are increasingly far apart from each other across many dimensions: not only ideology and policy preferences, but also simpler things like whether they like each other and are comfortable socializing together. Polarization fundamentally refers to *distance*, and when the parties are further apart, it's harder to meet in the middle or see the other side clearly.

Anything that doesn't fit neatly into the categories of Republican or Democrat, such as local identity or many local policy debates, can be depolarizing. But when local media disappears, nonpartisan identity weakens, and divisive national news fills the void. As partisan differences deepen, other identities — race, religion, and even where you eat and what car you drive — start to become aligned with that party identification.

My 2018 article with Matthew Hitt and Johanna Dunaway tested this theory using data from 2008–2012 and found that split-ticket voting — when someone votes for one party's candidate for president, for example, but a different party further down the ballot — decreased by 1.9 percent after a newspaper closure. We showed that this couldn't be explained solely by uninformed voters, since those in areas with closures were no less likely to leave downballot contests blank (known as “roll-off”). We also looked at areas where newspapers closed just after the 2012 election and found no effect: this told us that it wasn't just “the kind of areas that lost a newspaper,” but specifically a newspaper closing before the election, that was polarizing. In short, losing a newspaper makes people switch into national news, which means less exposure to local races and more partisan voting.

NEWS DESERTS ARE SPREADING ...

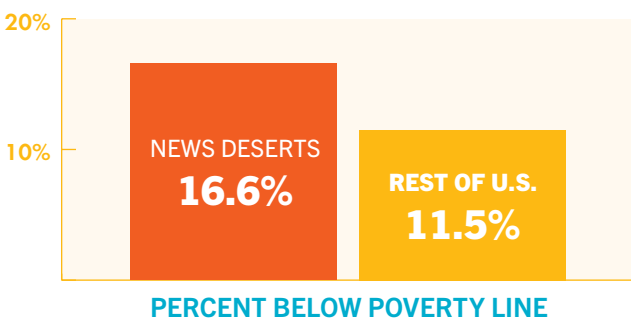
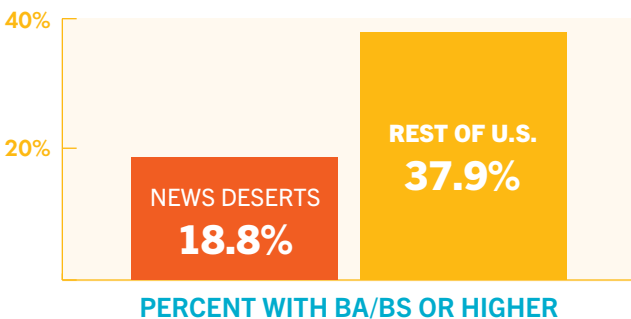
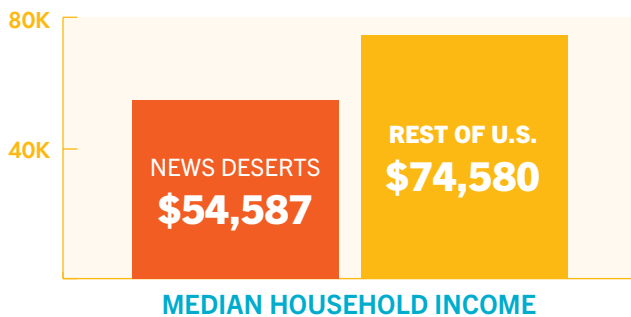
49.5%

of U.S. counties have just a single surviving news outlet

203

counties do not have a single local news outlet

... ESPECIALLY IN LOWER-INCOME AREAS



IN WHAT WAYS CAN LOCAL NEWS DELIVER CIVIC BENEFITS? HOW CAN IT BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER?

The decline of local news receives the lion's share of the attention, but the opposite is also true: plenty of research shows how more and better local news has been shown to improve the civic life of communities. Better local news means higher turnout, even with low-turnout groups (such as young voters) and in lower-turnout elections (like state judicial contests). Voters also consistently make better-informed and less-biased assessments of local downballot candidates where local news is stronger.

We discovered another way local news could have civic benefits in our 2021 book, *Home Style Opinion*, in which we studied the effects of a 2019 experiment in localization by the *Desert Sun* newspaper in Palm Springs, California. The editor at the time, Julie Makinen, read our article about the polarizing effects of newspaper closures and decided to do something about it: the newspaper dropped national politics from its opinion page for the month of July. No more nationally syndicated columnists, mentions of President Trump, or discussions of Congress — just California and Palm Springs topics for 31 days. We showed that national politics previously comprised a full third of the opinion page — 3,500 miles from Washington, D.C.! We also conducted surveys before and after the experiment that showed affective and social polarization — in other words, whether you like people on the other side or are comfortable socializing with them — slowed down over the course of that month in Palm Springs, relative to a comparison community (Ventura) that maintained its national opinion content.

YOUR ANDREW CARNEGIE FELLOWS PROJECT LOOKS AT HOW LOCAL NEWS CAN EARN BACK TRUST AND REDUCE POLITICAL POLARIZATION. WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

As a political science PhD who had primarily done quantitative research, I appreciate that my Andrew Carnegie fellowship gives me the chance to get out into the field and observe journalists in action as they navigate today's financial and attention economies. I've completed several visits to cities and newsrooms where I interviewed journalists, community members, and local politicians; worked with Trusting News — a research and training project that empowers journalists to demonstrate credibility and earn trust — to inform and assess their efforts using experiments; and, in the next few weeks, will field survey experiments in key cities where new and exciting models of local journalism have emerged.

My interviews with city councillors in several midwestern cities were particularly illuminating. Local politicians have a keen awareness of the media options in their cities, and even if they have an oppositional relationship with their city's newspaper (or what's left of it) today, they are nostalgic for a time when it was stronger and more widely read. Many younger politicians, especially,

When local media disappears, nonpartisan identity weakens, and divisive national news fills the void.

are enthusiastic consumers of local nonprofit news and hope it succeeds, suggesting that we should include local politicians' perspectives in our continual reimagining of local news.

WHAT OTHER CREATIVE SOLUTIONS AND NEW APPROACHES COULD HELP ADDRESS THE LOCAL MEDIA CRISIS?

New models of local news should aim to produce sustainable civic benefits while addressing its role in reinforcing inequalities. For-profit local newspapers have, in many cases, ignored disadvantaged neighborhoods or sent reporters only to cover crime and other negative stories. Those communities should be a partner in creating the future of local news, with the goal of using civic information to hold their municipal government accountable, make sure their residents' positive stories are uplifted, help make state and city policies and services easier to use, and explain how government actually works to supply a solid foundation for civic action.

One way to do this, as I'm seeing in my research, is through incorporating a program called Documenters into the newsroom. Documenters is a simple idea: pay local residents to attend local government meetings, take notes, and pose questions that journalists or their fellow citizens might be able to help them answer. After getting its start with City Bureau in Chicago several years ago, Documenters has now spread to nearly 20 cities and is an essential part of the newsrooms I recently visited, such as Mirror Indy in Indianapolis and the Signal newsrooms in Cleveland and Akron. That sort of creative thinking is blossoming despite (or, perhaps, because of) our current crisis, and it makes me hopeful about the future of local news in America. ■

Joshua P. Darr is associate professor in the Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University and coauthor, with Matthew P. Hitt and Johanna L. Dunaway, of *Home Style Opinion: How Local Newspapers Can Slow Polarization* (Cambridge University Press, 2021).

WHAT ALTERNATIVE AND ETHNIC NEWS OUTLETS ARE LEFT?

The footprint for alternative local news outlets remains small and centered around metro areas.

550

DIGITAL-ONLY SITES

720

ETHNIC MEDIA OUTLETS

215

PUBLIC BROADCASTING STATIONS

Since 2018, roughly the same number of digital news start-ups has opened as the number that has closed.

More than

150

LONG-RUNNING ETHNIC NEWS OPERATIONS

closed during the pandemic.

Source: The State of Local News 2023 (Northwestern University/Medill School of Journalism)

FUNDING JOURNALISM FOR A STRONGER DEMOCRACY

Philanthropy is stepping in to fund local journalism as a force for community cohesion, civic participation, and government accountability

By Celeste Ford

This election year, Americans are asked to consider many important issues, yet the latest research shows that more than half of the counties nationwide have either no access or very limited access to local news. Nonprofit newsrooms are working to serve these “news deserts” but have struggled to stay open for the same reasons traditional outlets are struggling. Today, philanthropy is responding with dramatic increases in funding, including dozens of new journalism grantmakers.

The most significant initiative is called Press Forward. The funder collaborative raised an unprecedented half billion dollars in 2023, including \$5 million from Carnegie Corporation of New York, and is aiming for \$1 billion. It will offer historic levels of support for a “local news renaissance that will . . . re-center local journalism as a force for community cohesion, civic participation, and government accountability.” After launching in January, Press Forward announced the creation of 17 local chapters in less than two months, and has issued its first open call for small local newsrooms to apply for \$100,000 grants.

“Like others across the country, we at Carnegie Corporation of New York have been greatly concerned by the growing polarization of American society and by the erosion of the forces of social cohesion,” said Dame Louise Richardson,

president of the Corporation. “By investing in local news through the Press Forward initiative, we have an extraordinary opportunity to ensure that many more communities have access to local news coverage and fact-based information. In so doing, we seek to encourage unfettered civil discourse and freedom of speech, hallmarks of any vibrant democracy.”

The Corporation has funded public interest journalism for 60 years, and today, the grants run into the millions annually. Some pay for programs that train journalists or develop long-term sustainability models, but like most foundations, the Corporation primarily supports coverage of topics related to its program priorities. These include K–16 education, voter access and voting rights, and international peace and security. A summary of each grant is posted in the searchable grants database available on the Corporation’s website.

A recent survey from NORC at the University of Chicago, *Journalism and Philanthropy: Growth, Diversity, and Potential Conflicts of Interest*, provides an overview of the sector’s role and influence. Commissioned by Media Impact Funders and the Lenfest Institute for Journalism, the report looks at the surge in grants to nonprofit and for-profit newsrooms, the growing focus on communities of color, the importance of editorial independence, and the need for transparency in disclosing who is funding news coverage.

In one of the most promising findings, journalism funders were asked about their decision-making, and 81 percent said that promoting “civic engagement with trusted news and information” was an extremely or very important factor. ■

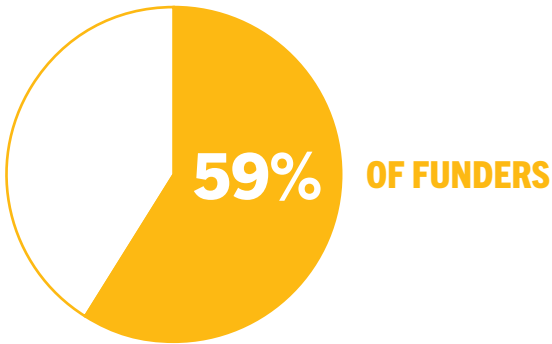
Celeste Ford is the chief communications officer at Carnegie Corporation of New York.

THE STATE OF PHILANTHROPY-FUNDED NEWS

As news outlets struggle to stay open, a survey of grantmakers shows they are responding with dramatic increases in support

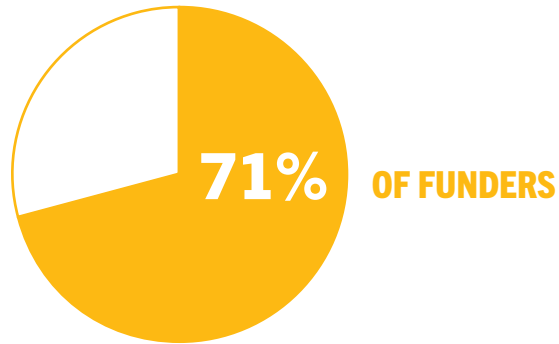
According to a recent survey of 129 funders and 431 news organizations:

FUNDING IS ACCELERATING ...



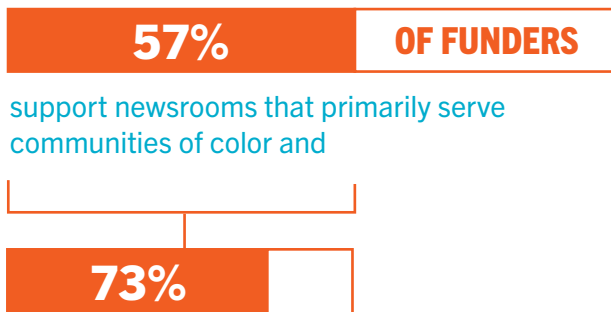
report increased grantmaking for journalism over the past five years

... AND IS FOCUSED ON LOCAL ISSUES



currently make grants to increase local journalism production

GRANTMAKERS VALUE DIVERSITY ...



support newsrooms that primarily serve communities of color and

of these funders have increased that funding in the last five years.

... AND EDITORIAL INDEPENDENCE

92%
of nonprofit newsrooms and

83%
of for-profit newsrooms say funders did not see their work prior to publication

86%
of nonprofit newsrooms and

46%
of for-profit newsrooms publicly disclose at least some of their donors

Source: Journalism and Philanthropy: Growth, Diversity, and Potential Conflicts of Interest (NORC at the University of Chicago/Media Impact Funders/The Lenfest Institute for Journalism, 2023)

◆◆◆◆ the **SECRET LIFE** ◆◆◆◆
LIBRARIANS

Andrew Carnegie provided more than \$56 million to build 2,509 libraries, believing that a library “outranks any other one thing a community can do to benefit its people.” A longstanding supporter of the American Library Association for more than a century, Carnegie Corporation of New York has supported the association’s I Love My Librarian Award since 2008, recognizing and celebrating exceptional librarians and their contributions to their communities.



Carnegie Corporation of New York
in partnership with the
American Library Association and the **New York Public Library**
SecretLifeofLibrarians.org

In a small, rural Arkansas town, the local library is meeting residents' everyday needs. Through a "Library of Things," librarian Clare Graham lends items from Instant Pots to power washers. At the Queens Public Library, Fred Gitner and his team of librarians offer multilingual workshops guiding new immigrants on vital topics from health care to legal services.

Graham and Gitner are two of 10 exceptional librarians honored by the American Library Association, the New York Public Library, and Carnegie Corporation of New York with this year's I Love My Librarian Award.

The Secret Life of Librarians series explores the little-known stories of librarians across the country and their contributions as civic leaders who are improving lives and drawing communities together. The 2024 honorees were chosen from a pool of more than 1,400 community-based nominations and were each awarded a \$5,000 prize in recognition of their exceptional public service.

In the following profiles, learn more about the multifaceted role of libraries in today's society, and join us in celebrating and appreciating these outstanding librarians. ■





Melissa Corey, a middle school librarian in a high-poverty community, refuses to keep books from students who can't afford them. She's moved parents to tears with a new kind of book fair, filled with diverse titles she's personally selected, that students may take home for free.



Melissa Corey

Robidoux Middle School, St. Joseph, Missouri

We are in a high-poverty area. It's always hard when kids say, "I don't have any money to buy a book, but I really want this one." And so we found ways around that.

In 2020, we decided to start hosting free book fairs. Every student gets three free books each semester — but if they want more than that, they can always take more.

It took a few months of research to figure out how it would work. Our budget is about \$800 per semester, and I have to buy books for about 400 students, so that's 1,200 books. I use a few services to order new books donated by publishers; we essentially just pay for the shipping.

I'm evaluating each and every title I put onto my shelves and into my book fair. I want to make sure that my collection is diverse and that every student is represented. Not knowing what everyone is dealing with — it could be their identity, it could be poverty, it could be something in their home — I just want to make sure that if a student is in my library, they're going to see the broad spectrum of humanity there.

I have kids who tell me, "You don't know what this meant to me to have this in your library." Or, "My parents had to buy me a bookcase to hold all the books that I got at your book fair." We've had parents who have literally been moved to tears by the fact that their child is able to get books from the book fair for the first time. Every year, I get thank-you cards that make me want to just sit at my desk and cry.

I see the library not just as the heart of the school, but the heart of the community. At this point, we've flooded the town with over 5,000 books in three years. So I know that we're having an impact.

PHOTO CREDIT: ANDRÉ CHUNG

At Lane Community College in Eugene, Oregon, librarian and artist **Claire Dannenbaum** empowers learners – using her creative background to turn an ordinary class about research skills into an unforgettable exploration of heavy metal music.



Claire Dannenbaum

Lane Community College, Eugene, Oregon

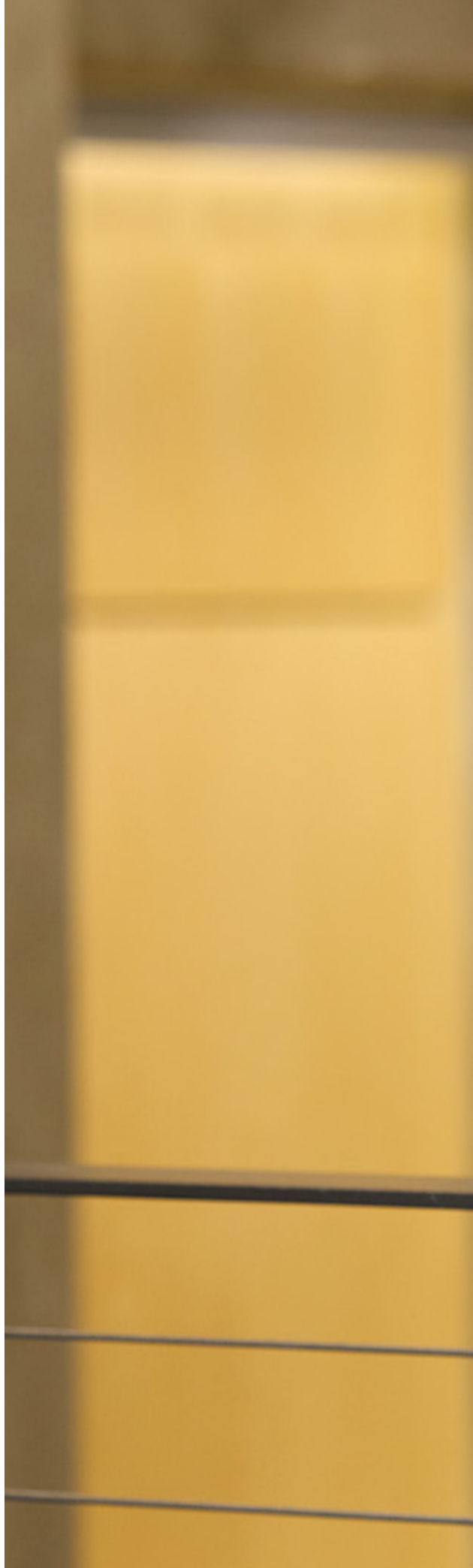
I am an interdisciplinary thinker with a lot of interests: art, art history, architecture, anthropology, and ethnography. Being a librarian allows me to pull from multiple disciplines and skills and rub them together.

Community college librarians tend to be generalists and at Lane I'm a liaison to multiple departments on campus: art and design, biology, botany, philosophy, geography and anthropology, and the health professions. I engage with students in those disciplines who need help with research, or just exploring new subject knowledge. Community college students come from a wide range of backgrounds and have varying literacy skills, and some may feel insecure or unprepared in the academic environment. Sometimes this means shifting our ideas about what learning and research is about.

For example, I developed a class that focused on heavy metal music: something everybody has an opinion about – whether it's "I love it," or "My son listens to that nonsense." That class was a game-changer for me as a teacher. I realized I could move the focus from a traditional assignment topic to something that was already alive in the students' minds. And that really is the kernel for all good research: What do I already know? What do I need to investigate? What are my biases? What compels me to learn more?


Questioning, reading, voicing, or making things – these are the tools I have used in my own life and learning. And just as there's no single way to do research, there's no single way to be a librarian. That's why I get involved with all kinds of campus activities, from mentoring students to makerspace programs to talks on democracy. I'm trying to support and expand the ways people can engage with the world.

PHOTO CREDIT: GRITCHELLE FALLESGON









In the late 1970s, the Central Branch of the Queens Public Library launched a federally funded pilot program called New Americans Project to bring services to recent immigrants in New York City. The program continues today under the leadership of **Fred Gitner**, whose small team of librarians offers multilingual workshops guiding new arrivals on vital topics from health care to legal services.



Fred Gitner

Queens Public Library, Jamaica, New York

When the New Americans Program started at the Queens Public Library more than four decades ago, they first focused on adding books for three communities: Spanish-speaking, Chinese, and Greek. Then they added cultural programming to attract people to the library, like music, dance, and film showings.

Later, they added English classes and what we call coping skills workshops, to help people adapt to a new country. I've been helping run those for 28 years now. Some of the English classes have a job component, where you can learn vocabulary to work in a hotel, or be a computer technician. We offer the skills workshops in the top five languages of Queens today: besides English, there's Spanish, Mandarin, Bengali, Korean, and Russian.

Libraries can save lives. We once did a Spanish-language diabetes workshop with a doctor, where you could get tested as well. A woman came with her mother, who was a recent arrival from South America. The test revealed the woman had diabetes, and we were able to help her make a hospital appointment on the spot.

There have been a lot of migrants and asylum seekers arriving recently. Many of them are looking for a New York City ID, and the Central Library is one of the few places in Queens to get one. We have long lines very early in the morning, and we've had to coordinate staff who know Spanish, French, and Haitian Creole to explain the process. We're trying our best to respond. Because that's what the library does: it provides information.

PHOTO CREDIT: ANDRÉ CHUNG

In the small, rural Arkansas town of Malvern, the library is meeting residents' everyday needs. Through a "Library of Things," **Clare Graham**, director of Malvern Hot Spring County Library, lends out everyday items from Instant Pots to power washers. Graham says her goal is simple: "share the wealth."



Clare Graham

Malvern Hot Spring County Library Director, Malvern, Arkansas

The library is where I do what I like to do: help people. This is a small, rural, high-poverty community, and I just love providing things and opportunities that people wouldn't otherwise have.

My mom got cancer when I was twelve, and we didn't have a support system. That turned into being evicted multiple times and living on people's couches. I remember being hungry and a neighbor coming over with some okra soup, and how it affected me just to have that one person care enough. That feeling still drives me every day.

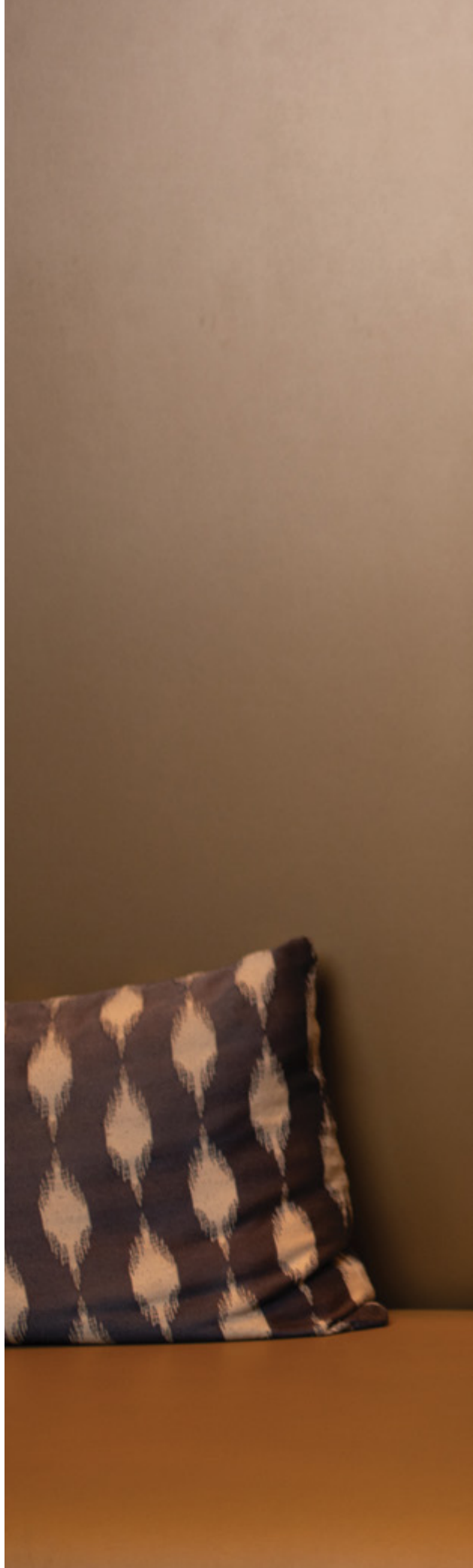
Our library works with the homeless coalition and churches to hand out necessity bags. Thirty-five percent of people in this county don't have Internet, so when Covid hit we bought hotspots and set them up at restaurants, gas stations, wherever they would let us do it.

The library is a place to go when people don't know where else to go. Like the 85-year-old disabled gentleman who came to us for help renewing his housing. Or an older lady who came in saying, "I have cancer. I've got all these forms to fill out. I can't write." Or the teenager who comes in to do schoolwork on a cracked cell phone: this is a place where he can feel like he belongs.

Last year, we opened a "Library of Things." There's so much stuff, and it's based on what folks need. The biggest hits are the power washer and the carpet cleaner. We've got a popcorn machine and an Instant Pot. We're right on the river, so you can come borrow a tube to float.


We've heard people saying, "If it's not in the library, it's not in Malvern." Because we're so much more than a building with books; we've got our finger on the pulse of our community.

PHOTO CREDIT: ANDRÉ CHUNG









At R.D. & Euzelle Smith Middle School in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, librarian **Gabriel Graña** encourages students to transform the library into a space where they can be themselves — whether that’s an aspiring rapper or a 3D designer. Graña tells them, “It’s not my library, it’s yours.”



Gabriel Graña

R.D. & Euzelle Smith Middle School, Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Having a space where a kid can be themselves completely, where they can feel seen — that’s what the library should be.

The great scholar of children’s literature Rudine Sims Bishop said that books should be “mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors.” That’s the core of what I think about when I’m developing my collection. Do I have books featuring Taiwanese leads? Do I have books written by queer authors? Do I have graphic novels that feature disabled characters who have great magical adventures or solve incredible mysteries?

I like to tell kids, “It’s not my library, it’s yours.” One kid asked me, “Can I bring my guitar or my ukulele?” I’m like, “Sure, let’s do a music day.” And so kids started bringing instruments and they would play during library lunch. I’ve mentored two kids in rapping. Another kid showed interest in 3D printing, so we got a 3D printer in the library, and now multiple kids come in regularly to print 3D stuff.

In middle school, one of our main goals is to make kids realize that there are adults who want to be in their corner. My role is to help find and grow their passions: Who are you? What do you want to do in this life? Let me help you get there. And if you don’t know, let me help you explore all these avenues so that one day it’ll click. I can’t think of anything more rewarding than helping a kid figure that out about themselves.

PHOTO CREDIT: ANDRÉ CHUNG

During the 2018 school shooting in Parkland, Florida, librarian **Diana Haneski** protected 50 students and five faculty from harm within a barricaded equipment room at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. Since that day, Haneski has transformed the library into a sanctuary where mental health takes center stage.



Diana Haneski

Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, Parkland, Florida

It's been six years now, but it's always on my mind – the 17 who lost their lives at our school. That day, I was with 55 people in a big equipment closet, and we just sat quietly in the dark, watching for the shadow of someone walking by.

My first reaction after the shooting was, “How could I go back there?” But I got strength from watching the kids, and the families who lost their loved ones: they were fighting to make things better.

I decided to turn an unused room into a space for people to feel comfortable, a spot for somebody who's having a hard time. We painted it, and now there are yoga pillows, comfy soft stools, and two little recliners. I even purchased some essential oils.

We also got River. She's our official therapy dog, and I'm her mom. She comes to school every day, and she's there for everyone to pet and talk to. Sometimes you just look at her and you're happy because she's amazing.

Students have anxiety and stress for many reasons. So many kids have come up to me, saying, “I just can't go to class right now. Please let me come in the library and let me sit with River for a while.” And now some of those kids are off to college on their own and doing well.

If we could teach kids how to take care of themselves, and move on with love and kindness, and to be the best they could be ... that's pretty much the change that has happened in me as well. I've learned to recognize the signs in my body, and when I'm starting to feel anxiety, I take a deep breath.

I don't want to be the know-it-all standing up there saying, “Oh, I know everything.” I just want to encourage everybody to help themselves and help each other. I walk in school every day telling myself, “It's going to be a good day. We're going to get a lot done, and we're going to make sure it's fun and joyful.”

PHOTO CREDIT: ANDRÉ CHUNG







As a librarian at one of Puerto Rico's two patent and trademark resource centers, **Gladys E. López-Soto** helps inventors navigate the complex patent application process, transforming their dreams into a reality.



Gladys E. López-Soto

University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez, Mayagüez, Puerto Rico

In middle school, I talked a lot in the classroom, and as punishment, my teacher sent me to the library. The only thing I remember feeling is, “I don’t want to be here.”

Unlike many parts of the United States, we do not have a robust library culture in Puerto Rico. We do not have libraries in most towns, schools, and barrios.

When I went to the University of Puerto Rico, I discovered its library — a big building with six floors of books — and I fell in love with their resources, activities, and the services that they provided to the community. So I studied library and information science, and I’ve dedicated the past 29 years of my career to the university’s libraries. For the past seven years, I’ve served as a Patent and Trademark Resource Center librarian, at one of only two PTRCs on the entire island.

In this role, I assist students, faculty, inventors, and entrepreneurs with intellectual property matters. Navigating the patent application process can be daunting. Often, I help inventors who are unfamiliar with English, computers, or the Internet. They have a dream, and by guiding them through the process, I feel like the dream maker.

After Hurricane Maria, our library was forced to close for more than a year. The ceilings were damaged. The books were filled with fungus. We had to move our services temporarily to an art museum.

But we persevere because libraries are so important for our communities. I think of a patron who travels here from San Juan every month, just to learn the patent application process step by step — telling me, “please teach me how to do this.” He doesn’t quit, so I don’t quit. We have a Puerto Rican adage, “Solo el pueblo salva al pueblo.” Because we need to help each other. That’s what librarians do: we help people pursue their dreams.

PHOTO CREDIT: ANDRÉ CHUNG

At Northwestern University, **Ted Quiballo**, the instructional technologies librarian, doesn't just serve academics – he uses his background in electronics engineering to mentor young asylum seekers and incarcerated students in the skills of science and technology. The library's priority, Quiballo tells his staff, is to “make community.”



Ted Quiballo

Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois

In our library, we have a makerspace. You can make 3D prints, circuit boards, and all these things. But in reality, the more time you spend in there, what you're really in there making is community.

In the space, you're allowed to fail without judgment. I think that helps people be more innovative, be willing to take risks without fear, and go beyond what they think their capabilities are.

Over the last two years, we've partnered with a charity called World Relief. They place refugees and asylum seekers in Chicago neighborhoods; we offer a summer program to some of the youth refugees. We teach them STEM activities, 3D printing, coding, and videomaking.

There was a unique challenge. Most of them spoke Arabic and Pashtu, so we ended up learning from each other. They were teaching us their language, we were teaching them STEM activities – and we were bonding and creating relationships.

Another program I've been involved with is the Northwestern Prison Education Program. Incarcerated students write to me with physics and astronomy requests, and I get ecstatic when I see the topics they're interested in, like dark matter, black holes, and asteroids.

At first, I was sending them too many difficult resources. I was getting responses like, “I don't know what this means. This is way too long.” So I had to meet them at their level, and it opened a door of communication. I started adding notes to the letters: “Hey, I hope you're doing well. Please let me know if you need anything else.” Just expressing kindness and concern about their well-being, helping them through the process and their education.

Last year, some of the students actually graduated with a bachelor's from Northwestern – which was so satisfying. We had a huge celebration.

PHOTO CREDIT: ANDRÉ CHUNG







Mychal Threets has introduced millions of people online to the idea of “library joy.” On TikTok and Instagram, the librarian has become famous for his stories about young readers’ enthusiasm and his heartfelt reflections about mental health. Threets left his job at the Solano County Library in February, but continues to spread joy as the resident librarian for a new PBS Kids social media series.



Mychal Threets

Solano County Library, Fairfield, California

Libraries have always been a part of my life. I was homeschooled, and I was always a bookworm kid, so I spent day after day in the public library. It’s where I always felt comfortable, where I felt safe. Even when I was going through anxiety and difficult times, the book characters were there for me: Ramona Quimby, Matilda, Willy Wonka — they were my friends.

I started sharing video stories from the library to TikTok and Instagram just over a year ago. I get very excited, very animated in the stories because they mean so much to me. Most of the time when I share stories, it’s either because I’m having a hard day, and it’s a reminder to myself to keep on going, or someone has messaged me about how hard their day is. So it’s me sharing what brought me joy that day, and then hoping that someone else will find joy in that story too.

Being a librarian is a remarkably stressful job. What I share are often the best parts of library life, but there are so many things I don’t post because they’re so difficult. We’re not trained to be mental health professionals, to assist the homeless, the unhoused, the unsheltered. But we still help them — and it’s so rewarding to hear when those people go from just trying to survive each day at the library, to flourishing, to getting jobs. When they come back and say, “Hey, you haven’t seen me in a while, and this is why,” you just celebrate with them.

That’s why I talk about library joy all the time. Being a part of people’s lives, forming friendships, hearing their stories, that’s the best part of being a librarian. I just want to be there for my community, remind them of all the library offers, and that this is somewhere they can believe that they belong.

PHOTO CREDIT: ANDRÉ CHUNG

In Fort Wayne, Indiana, the Allen County Public Library is home to one of the largest genealogy centers in the nation. **Curt Witcher**, the center's manager, helps visitors from around the world search through vast archives to find their own story.



Curt Witcher

Allen County Public Library, Fort Wayne, Indiana

I have worked every day of my 45-year library career in the Allen County Public Library Genealogy Center. We have an amazing collection: 1.2 million physical items, dozens of licensed databases. We can find census records, school records, letters, and so much more. With a talented team of expert librarians, my role is to help you discover your story in whatever way you're most comfortable.

It doesn't matter your ethnicity, your age, your zip code, your education: everybody can participate, everybody can play and benefit from the power of story.

On one occasion a high schooler came in, excited to learn about his grandfather who was in the military, and we found his obituary. His eyes turn big, he's shaking his head, like, "What? I never knew that. That's what I wanted to find."

On another occasion an African American father brought his son into our special Lincoln collection, and they looked at an actual document that Union soldiers handed out to enslaved people at the end of the Civil War, telling them that they're free. And he said to his son, "This is really important. This is where our freedom comes from."

It's hard to be in a genealogy center and not be curious about your own family story. My mother's immediate family was very poor; she disliked talking about it. After some digging, I found out she grew up in a slum in southern Indiana. Knowing that abject poverty in which she lived really helped me understand who she was, the lives of her parents and grandparents, and explained a lot of things for me.

One of our library's core missions is encouraging lifelong learning and discovery. And that's what makes a successful story finder and storyteller. Genealogy can be really rigorous and requires a lot of time. No matter how much you think you know, there's always more to discover and more to learn. That's enjoyable to me. I've never had a dull moment with my job because there's always something new; something exciting to learn.

We help people find meaning in their families' stories, we help them find a thread to their past. It gives us an opportunity to know our community better and discover our true history together.

PHOTO CREDIT: ANDRÉ CHUNG





‘FOR THE GOOD OF THE PEOPLE’

For Andrew Carnegie, a free public library was the “best gift which can be given to a community”

By **Kenneth Benson**

In his 1889 essay, *The Gospel of Wealth*, Andrew Carnegie wrote, “The man who dies thus rich dies disgraced.” Then the world’s richest person, Carnegie concluded that the wealthy were merely trustees of their wealth — and that their solemn duty was to administer it, during their lifetimes, “for the good of the people.” Worthy beneficiaries, he believed, included universities, colleges, hospitals, public parks, research laboratories, public baths, concert and meeting halls, memorial arches, museums, and churches. But what lay closest to the visionary philanthropist’s heart? The library — or, as history would show, thousands of libraries.

In *The Gospel of Wealth*, Carnegie traced the origins of his devotion to libraries:

It is, no doubt, possible that my own personal experience may have led me to value a free library beyond all other forms of beneficence. When I was a boy in Pittsburgh, Colonel Anderson, of Allegheny — a name I can never speak without feelings of devotional gratitude — opened his little library of four hundred books to boys. Every Saturday afternoon he was in attendance himself at his house to exchange books. No one but he who has felt it can know the intense longing with which the arrival of Saturday was awaited, that a new book might be had ... I resolved, if ever wealth came to me, that it should be used to establish free libraries, that other poor boys might receive opportunities similar to those for which we were indebted to that noble man.

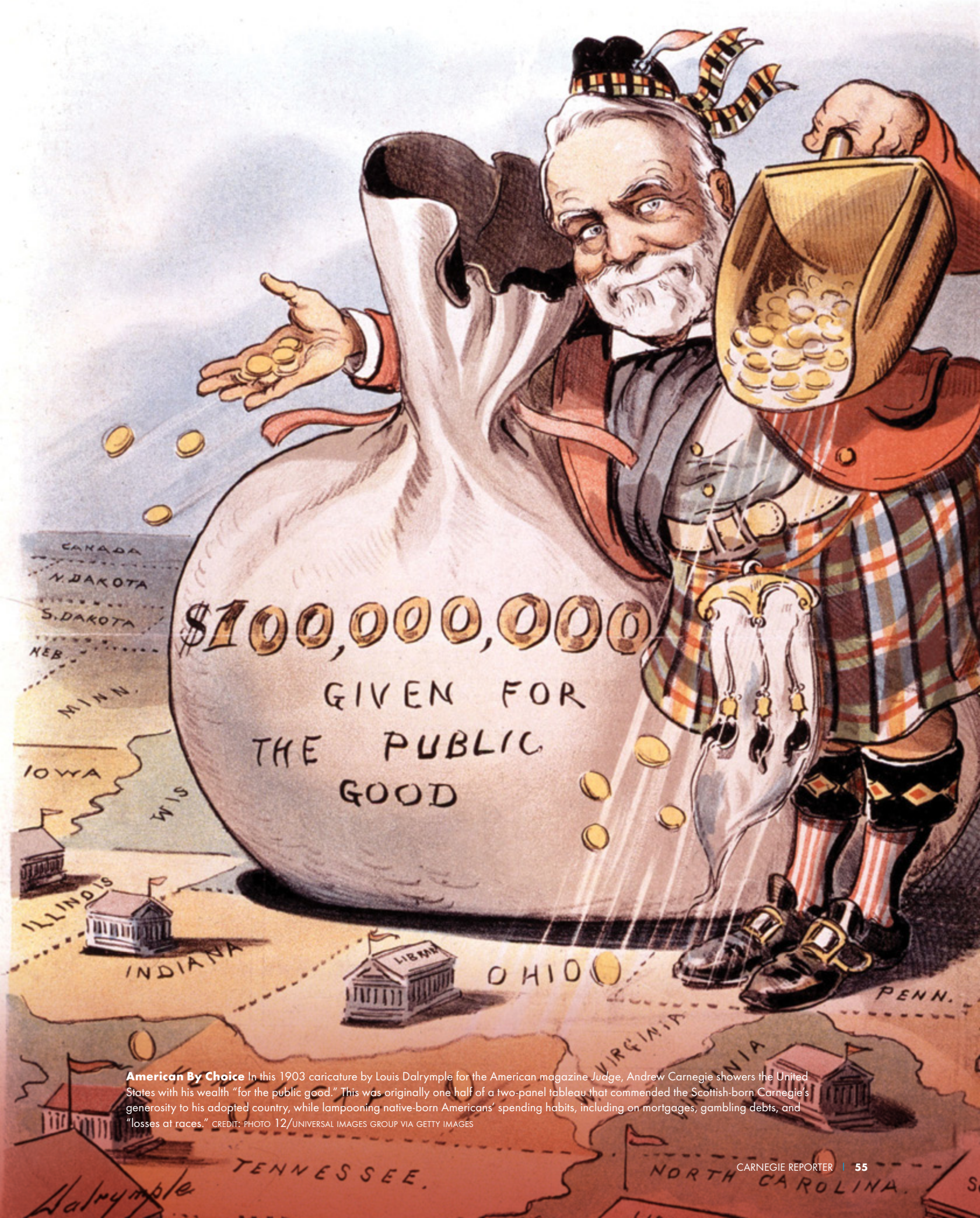
“Sixty-Five Libraries at One Stroke”

On March 9, 1901, John S. Billings, director of the recently incorporated New York Public Library, wrote to Andrew Carnegie outlining his ambitious plans for a library system “promoting the education and enjoyment of the people and of making good citizens.” Billings knew that Carnegie — a proud immigrant who referred to himself as “the star-spangled Scotsman” — was also a very proud New Yorker. In a separate letter, he had shrewdly enclosed a statistical table about the number of libraries in Boston, Chicago, and other American cities relative to their populations — showing New York City well behind.

Carnegie’s response came within days. He would consider it a “rare privilege” to furnish New York City with “sixty-five libraries at one stroke,” through a gift of \$5.2 million.

That act made New York City one of the first beneficiaries of Carnegie’s library philanthropy, which eventually helped build more than 2,500 libraries around the world. In New York, Carnegie’s gift helped guarantee that every resident would have a library in their neighborhood, carrying on his vision of creating opportunity for all — especially for the newest immigrants to America — through access to books and education. ■

Kenneth Benson is Carnegie Corporation of New York’s editorial manager.



American By Choice In this 1903 caricature by Louis Dalrymple for the American magazine *Judge*, Andrew Carnegie shows the United States with his wealth “for the public good.” This was originally one half of a two-panel tableau that commended the Scottish-born Carnegie’s generosity to his adopted country, while lampooning native-born Americans’ spending habits, including on mortgages, gambling debts, and “losses at races.” CREDIT: PHOTO 12/UNIVERSAL IMAGES GROUP VIA GETTY IMAGES

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“Learn English!” Handbills from the Tompkins Square Library on Manhattan’s Lower East Side, October 1920 – in English, Hebrew, Polish, Italian, and Hungarian. The New York Public Library’s branch libraries offered assistance to the city’s many immigrant communities in a variety of ways, including free English-language classes. CREDIT: THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY ARCHIVES

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ביכער
און אידיש און ענגליש

טאמפקינס סקווער ברענטיש

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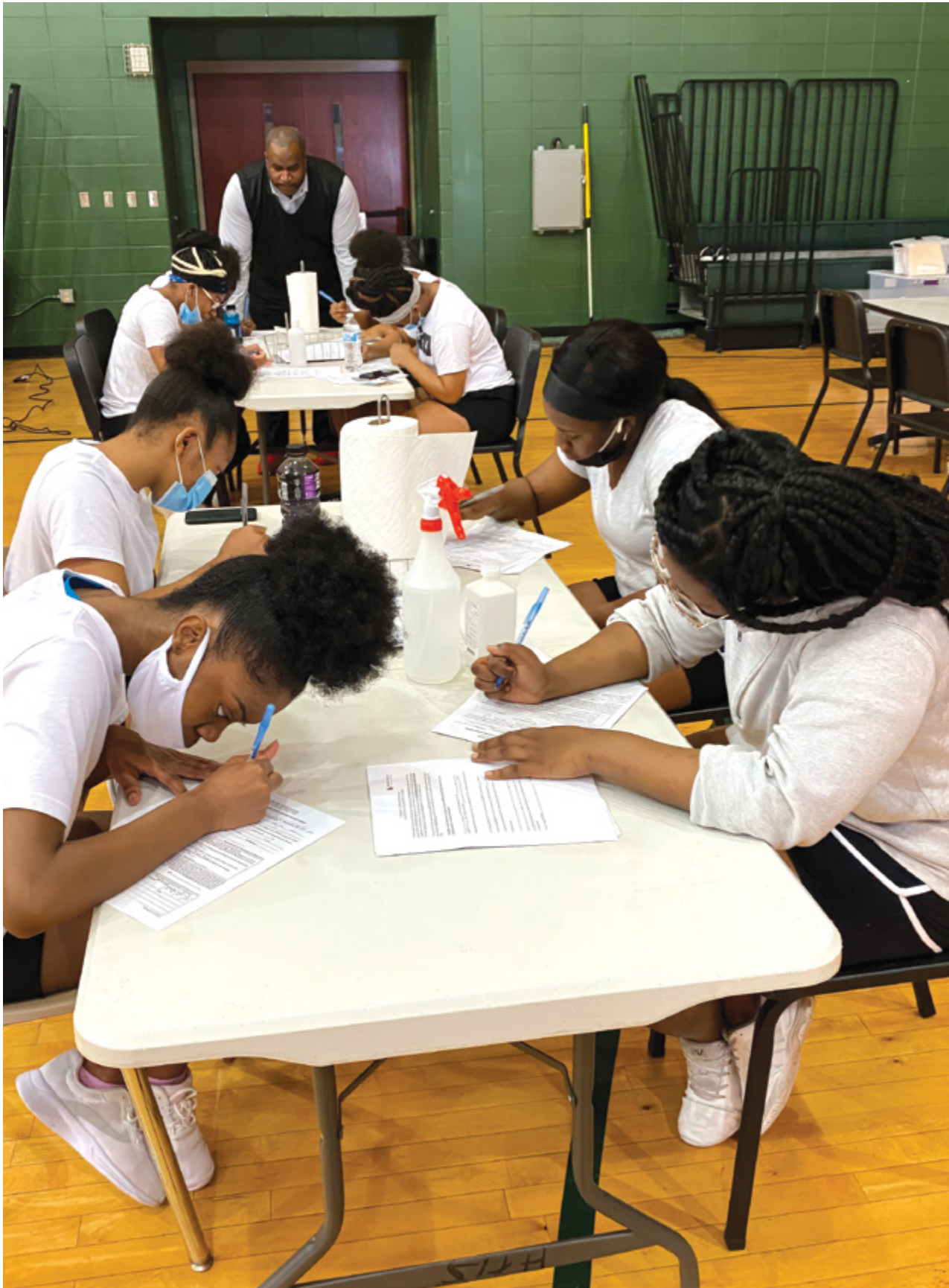
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New Yorki Nyilvános Könyvtár

On Their Way to the Library Since its opening on November 2, 1903, Chatham Square Library has been an integral part of Manhattan's Chinatown neighborhood, with one of the city's largest circulating Chinese-language collections since 1911. Librarians here were among the pioneers of storytelling to young patrons, often in multiple languages. In the summer of 1910, Lewis Wickes Hine captured a group of children lined up and ready to head from the playground to Chatham Square Library. CREDIT: THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY ARCHIVES



CHINESE CHILDREN FROM A
SUMMER PLAYGROUND ON THEIR WAY
TO CHATHAM SQUARE BRANCH. JULY 1910.



During the 2021–2022 school year, students at Huffman High School in Birmingham, Alabama, fill out forms to receive COVID-19 vaccines as principal John C. Lyons looks on in the school’s gymnasium. CREDIT: BCS MEDIA

INSIDE A HIGH-POVERTY SCHOOL DISTRICT'S EXCEPTIONAL POSTPANDEMIC REBOUND

But what will happen to Birmingham City Schools and other districts when federal relief ends this September?

By **Wilfred Chan**

In 2022 Birmingham City Schools superintendent Mark Sullivan was stunned when he found out how much his students had fallen behind. Their reading scores had dipped modestly from prepandemic levels, but their math performance — already well behind national averages before COVID-19 — had plummeted to “dismal” lows. For Sullivan, a former math teacher, that felt like a “punch in the gut.”

His district wasn't alone. Across the country, students suffered historic learning losses after COVID-19 shuttered classrooms, with dire losses in math. The impacts were especially felt in poor communities like Birmingham, where the vast majority of students are Black and receive free or reduced-price lunch.

New research by Harvard and Stanford researchers, with support from Carnegie Corporation of New York, finds that school districts are making a partial comeback. According to the Education Recovery Scorecard, the first nationwide study of pandemic education recovery, U.S. students made up roughly one-third of their pandemic loss in math, and one-quarter of their pandemic loss in reading during the 2022–23 academic year — aided by \$189 billion of federal pandemic funding for elementary and secondary schools.

The study also revealed dramatic rebounds in some low-income districts, including Birmingham City, where students have nearly caught up to their prepandemic math scores. Can other school districts and policymakers learn from these success stories before the time to spend the federal aid runs out?

A lack of data

The COVID-19 pandemic was devastating for student achievement — and recovery has not been a straightforward task, as schools must generate more learning per day despite staff shortages and rising student absenteeism.

There hasn't been a clear playbook, either. The majority of the federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER) has been directed at local school districts, which — while given wide latitude to make spending decisions — must do so before the program ends this September.

Tom Kane, a coauthor of the Education Recovery Scorecard and faculty director of the Harvard Center for Education Policy Research, was curious to find out which districts are seeing successful recoveries, and how their own districts' recoveries stack up against state and national trends. But, because states use different tests and different proficiency definitions, it was not possible to compare the achievement gains of students in different parts of the country.

Recognizing the urgency, Kane joined with Stanford Educational Opportunity Project sociologist Sean Reardon, an Andrew Carnegie Fellow, to publish the Education Recovery Scorecard, the first study to directly compare school districts' pandemic recoveries across the country. Using a method pioneered by Reardon, the researchers stitched together school districts' local test scores with states' performance on a national assessment to place every district's scores on a common grade-level scale. Educators and decision-makers can use the scorecard to zoom in on more than 8,000 school districts and check out how many grade levels their math and reading scores dropped between 2019 and 2022, and how much they've recovered since then.

The scorecard reveals important national trends. Because U.S. school districts have, on average, recovered just one-third of their math loss and one-quarter of their reading loss, many school districts will find themselves still far short of their prepandemic achievement by the time federal relief ends this fall, according to the researchers.

The report also identifies outperforming districts, like Birmingham City. While the study could not draw conclusions about the specific intervention strategies used by districts, Kane hopes the successful districts they identified can serve as case studies for educators and policymakers. "Without this, people might say, 'Okay, we're still behind; there aren't any bright spots to try to learn from,'" says Kane. "But now a district elsewhere in the country has a chance to learn from what Birmingham did."

The virus hits

Before becoming superintendent, Mark Sullivan had spent nearly his whole life in Birmingham City Schools — first as a student, then a teacher, then a principal — and knew the high stakes firsthand. "We are 89 percent African American, 11 percent Latino, and at 86 percent free and reduced lunch," he says. "For many of our students, this is their only shot to be successful."

When the virus shut down schools, the superintendent knew his district would struggle to keep instruction going: "We have 20,000 students, but when we did an inventory, we had about 6,000 devices." At first, they printed thousands of copies of classroom materials to send home. Then, when

CARNEGIE CONTEXT



No school district can do everything in a crisis. They have to make strategic choices so that resources are available to people at the right place and time. That's why it's so important that school district leaders and educators have access to data and understand how to interpret that data within the context and circumstances of a community.

Data-based initiatives like the Education Recovery Scorecard help identify success stories and show how interventions like tutoring, intersessions, and wraparound services can succeed if they are designed, implemented, and executed with attention to evidence. As we think beyond the pandemic, we may consider the ways that new tools — including AI — could help us use data analysis, balanced with human understanding, to make insights more readily available for educators.

LaVerne Evans Srinivasan is the vice president of Carnegie Corporation of New York's National Program and the program director for Education.



Superintendent Mark Sullivan, pictured with a Birmingham City Schools student in January 2024, advises educators, “Teach every child at high levels, and they will perform.” CREDIT: BCS MEDIA

ESSER funding came, the district bought devices and Internet hotspots for every student.

It turned out the students faced even bigger challenges.

During virtual instruction, teachers saw their students’ home lives. “We had children whose parents were essential workers at McDonald’s and Walmart, leaving their 10-year-old at home on a Zoom lesson, babysitting a crying two-year-old on her hip,” Sullivan recalls. Many of the students were struggling with food insecurity. “We realized that the meals they were receiving in school were a vital part of their success,” he says. So to keep students fed, the district employed lunchroom staff and bus drivers to drive meals into neighborhoods, and opened a drive-through for students to pick up meals from the cafeteria.

As the virus raged — ultimately claiming the lives of eight Birmingham City Schools staff and one student — the district took on a strong public health role. In fall 2020, when the district opened to a hybrid model, it made masks mandatory and set up one of its high schools as a mass vaccination site. To overcome vaccine skepticism within the community, schools hosted a series of “COVID conversations” that included children of Tuskegee Experiment survivors as well as Second Gentleman Douglas Emhoff. “If we can get people vaccinated, we can get school started,” Sullivan thought.



When you have environments that have been deprived for so long, and you provide additional support, it can really address a lot of needs.

— **Mark Sullivan**, Superintendent, Birmingham City Schools



The reopening

Then the first batch of test scores came in.

Birmingham City’s students had fallen badly behind — more than three-fifths of a grade level in math — after less than two years of the pandemic. Sullivan immediately knew the students would need more time with teachers in order to learn the content they missed. Kane agrees.

“It’s hard to imagine kids catching up without more instructional time,” and the best opportunity to add that time is summer, Kane says.

Case Study: Metro Nashville Public Schools

81,000 students, 39 percent Black, 32 percent Hispanic*

The Education Recovery Scorecard highlighted a dramatic rebound in Davidson County, Tennessee, where students' math scores, after dropping almost a full grade level during the pandemic, have nearly recovered to 2019 levels. (By contrast, the average U.S. school district has recovered just one-third of its pandemic loss in math scores, according to the report.) Metro Nashville Public Schools chief strategy officer Sarah Robinson Chin spoke to *Carnegie Reporter* about the key elements of the school district's recovery.

High-dosage tutoring

Metro Nashville Public Schools used ESSER funds to launch a new high-dosage tutoring program called Accelerating Scholars, which has enlisted teachers, tutors, and volunteers to serve more than 9,000 students. "The tutoring is done in small groups that are integrated into the school day as much as possible, for a minimum of 90 minutes per week," explains Chin. The tutoring isn't homework help, but a structured curriculum that follows the students' core subjects.

Wraparound services

During the pandemic, Metro Nashville launched a program called Community Achieves, which connects students and their families to outside resources — from household needs to mental health services. Another initiative, the Navigator program, pairs each student with a caring adult to regularly check in on the student's emotional, social, and practical well-being and to get them help if necessary.

New funding after ESSER

Metro Nashville is working with local officials to make sure their most critical initiatives funded by the federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER) don't fizzle out next year.

"We're fortunate that the City of Nashville has given us the green light to use some of the city's reserve fund balances to continue some of our ESSER programming," says Chin. "I think that shows that the community sees what we're doing and recognizes that it's working."

*2022 Nashville Chamber Education Report at: <https://education.nashvillechamber.report/mnps-by-the-numbers/>

The superintendent had a bold idea. He wanted to restart school in July 2022, but parents and teachers balked.

So his district settled on a compromise: an August to June school year with three additional one-week breaks called "intersessions," and a longer intersession over the summer, during which schools would offer extra instruction and after-school care paid for by federal funding. The district also hired tutors from local colleges to provide high-dosage tutoring for Birmingham students throughout the school year. And they doubled down on tier-one instruction — referring to core grade-level education. "Focus on standards, don't assume anything about children based on where they come from, what they look like, their disability, what language they speak," Sullivan explains. "Teach every child at high levels, and they will perform."

The intersessions have proven popular: 7,000 students took part in the district's most recent fall intersession. "That's 7,000 students in school learning when they don't have to be," Sullivan says.

Birmingham schools' preliminary data shows that students who have received tutoring or attended the intersessions

are making "significant" achievement gains compared with those who haven't, the administration says.

But absences were increasing as well. So Sullivan brought frontline staff — nurses, coaches, cafeteria staff, bus drivers — into his cabinet meetings, asking them, "What are you seeing?" The answer was that many children were still struggling with the pandemic's impacts, from mental health issues to hunger to homelessness.

The schools doubled down on wraparound services. Using ESSER funds, the district hired paraprofessional support staff for every classroom between kindergarten to third grade. The city of Birmingham granted the district an additional one million dollars to add a mental health counselor to every school. When teachers learned some students had dropped out because the pandemic forced them to start working — like one student who lost both of her parents to the virus and needed to take care of her younger sister — the district expanded a dropout recovery program with sites across the city for students to catch up outside of regular school hours.

Sullivan says the pandemic validated the importance of becoming attuned to students' individual and personal

needs. Thanks to the dropout recovery program, the student who lost her parents ended up graduating, says Sullivan. She's now in college studying to be a nurse.

“A joy that you wouldn't believe”

In 2023, it was time to find out if the recovery had worked. Mark Sullivan thought about everything his district had tried: “I was terrified that we had spent all this money, and that we wouldn't see a return.”

His chief academic officer came in holding Birmingham City Schools' 2022–23 test results. The officer had “a very straight face,” Sullivan recalls, and he braced for bad news. Then the officer pulled out the data and announced, “We have made significant gains.”

Sullivan felt a wave of relief. “It was a joy that you wouldn't believe,” he says.

According to the Education Recovery Scorecard, Birmingham has recovered more than half a grade level in math — nearly returning to its prepandemic levels, and outpacing Alabama's statewide average by a quarter of a grade level. And the district's own data shows its reading scores now exceed its reading scores prior to the pandemic.

The question is whether the momentum can continue after ESSER. “When you have environments that have been deprived for so long, and you provide additional support, it can really address a lot of needs,” says Sullivan. “And I'm concerned about losing the money.”

According to Kane and Reardon, there are a few ways school districts can maximize the funding's benefits before the funds expire.

While the funding cannot be spent on employee salaries after September, districts can use the federal money to make payments on contracts signed before then, such as for tutoring and afterschool providers. School districts should inform parents earlier if their students are falling behind; a 2022 Pew study found that parents are underestimating their children's pandemic learning losses. Increasing parental awareness sooner could lead to higher enrollment in summer sessions, another critical recovery tool. And like Birmingham, districts should continue to investigate and address the root causes of absenteeism in their schools, the researchers suggest.

In late June, Kane and Reardon published new research to quantify the effect of pandemic relief dollars on achievement, by comparing the recoveries of similar schools that received different amounts of funding.

Digital Equity: Can the progress continue?

Mississippi is one of three states where students' reading achievement now exceeds 2019 levels, according to the Education Recovery Scorecard. One important factor was a quick transition to remote learning — made possible in part by decisive action by state officials to spend federal funds on digital devices for students, says David Rock, dean of the School of Education at the University of Mississippi.

Many of those devices are now approaching the end of their lifespans, says Rock, raising concerns that school districts won't be able to keep students technologically equipped after federal funding runs out.

It's also critical that schools have enough resources to continue digital literacy education for all students, says Sara Platt, an assistant professor at the School of Education at the University of Mississippi. “How do we continue to make gains in digital equity, and how do we continue to help our kids become competitive?” asks Platt. “This has to be an expectation, just like we teach reading.”

And Kane is using the scorecard to spark discussion among educators and policymakers: “What are we going to do to continue the recovery once federal money runs out?” Already, he's spoken to superintendents who have used the scorecard to find out which other districts are performing well and to “draw some inferences about what kinds of policies they ought to be thinking about.”

Next year, many districts including Birmingham City may have to make tough decisions about which recovery programs to cut. “We're a high-poverty school district, and we have no control over that,” Sullivan says. But the real secret of his district's rebound, he explains, comes from something more fundamental: a belief in their students' promise. “You can be a high-achieving school district if you view the children as capable of doing the work.” ■

Wilfred Chan is the senior content editor and writer at Carnegie Corporation of New York.

ONEFUTURE COACHELLA VALLEY: BUILDING A STRONG LOCAL WORKFORCE

School districts, local colleges, businesses, and donors have come together to help thousands of low-income students in Southern California achieve career readiness and attend local colleges

Guadalupe Arreola's parents brought her from Mexico to California's Coachella Valley as a toddler so that she could get an education. Her father, a landscaper for a golf club, hadn't gone to school past first grade. Studying hard earned her admission to the University of California, Los Angeles, but as one of the few Latinas in her science classes, she struggled with "imposter syndrome."

Arreola found crucial support from OneFuture Coachella Valley, a nonprofit that brings together a broad array of partners — three K–12 school districts, local colleges, businesses, and donors — to help thousands of low-income students get to and through college and start promising careers. OneFuture gave her scholarships, financial aid workshops, and real-time advice for overcoming hurdles, such as how to find free tutoring.

Without OneFuture's encouragement, Arreola said, "I wouldn't have known how to navigate the higher educational system. As a first-generation student, you often feel lost."

Arreola, now 27, finished her bachelor's degree and is training to be a physician's assistant. Her story lies at the heart of OneFuture's mission: to launch young people into jobs that pay well while creating a talent pipeline in a resort area in dire need of skilled workers, especially in health care.

The sun-drenched valley, which includes Palm Springs and its surroundings, is known for its music festivals, tennis tournaments, and growing group of wealthy retirees. But it also has families facing severe economic hardship, including migrant workers farming bell peppers, citrus, dates, and table grapes.

The valley's three school districts together serve more than 65,000 K–12 students — nearly all qualify for subsidized lunch, and most are Hispanic. Like students from low-income backgrounds nationwide, they lag far behind their more affluent peers in getting college degrees.

OneFuture grew out of a regional push, begun in 2005, to solve entwined problems: only 30 percent of Coachella Valley residents had postsecondary education, and local



OneFuture Coachella Valley offers a wide array of programs and partnerships, including health care scholarships for Black and African American students and a program that focuses on helping students who are migrant or seasonal farm workers or the children of migrant or seasonal farm workers stay in school during their first year of college and continue into their second year of higher education. CREDIT: JACK DURAN/CARNEGIE CORPORATION OF NEW YORK



A student (right) shadows a chef in the JW Marriott Desert Springs culinary department through a high school pathway program supported by OneFuture's partner network in 2018. CREDIT: ONEFUTURECV

employers were frustrated that they had to recruit from outside the valley to fill 80 percent of their high-level positions.

The partnership rallied more than 100 organizations to commit to shared goals. They set high targets, such as having 70 percent of graduates earning a college degree or certificate, raising millions for scholarships, providing Internet access for all, and opening career-oriented academies in high schools.

“We’re bringing together a whole cross section of partners who have agreed to step outside of just their own agenda into the common agenda, so we can do bigger things than any one of us could do alone,” said Sheila Thornton, president of OneFuture. “That was the broken record, that we’re going to do this together.”

OneFuture became a stand-alone nonprofit in 2017 and has a yearly budget of \$3.5 million. Now local high schools offer 30 career academies, focusing on such fields as health care, hospitality, engineering, and public service, and 36 percent of students attend them. Seniors can graduate with certificates — in Adobe design, IT networking, health care, welding, and auto mechanics — that can land them jobs if they want to head straight to work.

PROFILES in COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP

LIFT. LEARN. LEAD.

This article is part of a series featuring local partnerships recognized by **Profiles in Collective Leadership**, an initiative by Carnegie Corporation of New York in partnership with the nonprofit

Transcend, that recognizes outstanding local partnerships that educate youth, bolster the workforce, and demonstrate the power of working together. The 10 nonpartisan collaborations in urban, suburban, and rural areas across the country draw on the strengths of local government, education, nonprofit, business, and health care professionals to catalyze socioeconomic mobility and civic engagement in their communities. The 10 recognized partnerships in eight states have been awarded \$200,000 grants and will act as exemplars, sharing what they have learned with each other and more broadly.

BY THE NUMBERS

From **2009** to **2021**, OneFuture scholarship recipients have completed **1,165** bachelor's degrees, **488** associate's degrees, **171** master's degrees, **17** doctoral degrees, and **87** certificates.

\$17 million in scholarships have been awarded to nearly **3,000** students.

Nearly **8,000** high school students study in career-oriented programs.

Academics improved as well. In 2012, only 26 percent of the graduating seniors had the coursework and test scores to qualify for the state's colleges. By 2022, that figure had jumped to 45 percent. Additionally, local college enrollment has increased by 18 percent since 2010.

To increase college enrollment, the partnership kicked off a competition to boost the number of students who filled out financial aid forms. Its success inspired the state to follow suit. Last year, 75 percent of Coachella Valley seniors filled out the aid forms. OneFuture offers college planning workshops, about \$1 million yearly in scholarships (along with matches from partners), and paid summer internships in health care administration, IT, public health, and other health fields. Dedicated projects focus on students from low-income families, first-generation students, young men, Black students, and children of migrant workers, who are at extra risk of falling behind academically.

Some alumni call OneFuture a lifeline. Dulce Lucero, a U.S. citizen born in California, was raised with the help of older siblings while their mother "followed the crop" to pick lettuce and jalapeños. In Lucero's sophomore year

of high school, their mother was deported while in the process of obtaining U.S. residency. At a time of intense fear and uncertainty, Lucero learned of OneFuture. The nonprofit's workshops taught her about mental health care, professional etiquette, and financial literacy. "Some of our parents didn't even have bank accounts," she said.

Lucero received scholarships from OneFuture to go to UCLA. Now a 24-year-old graduate, she works at California State University, San Bernardino Palm Desert Campus, for a partnership with OneFuture that helps migrant students overcome similar strains. "I have a passion for helping my community," Lucero said. "I'm so grateful to be a part of that."

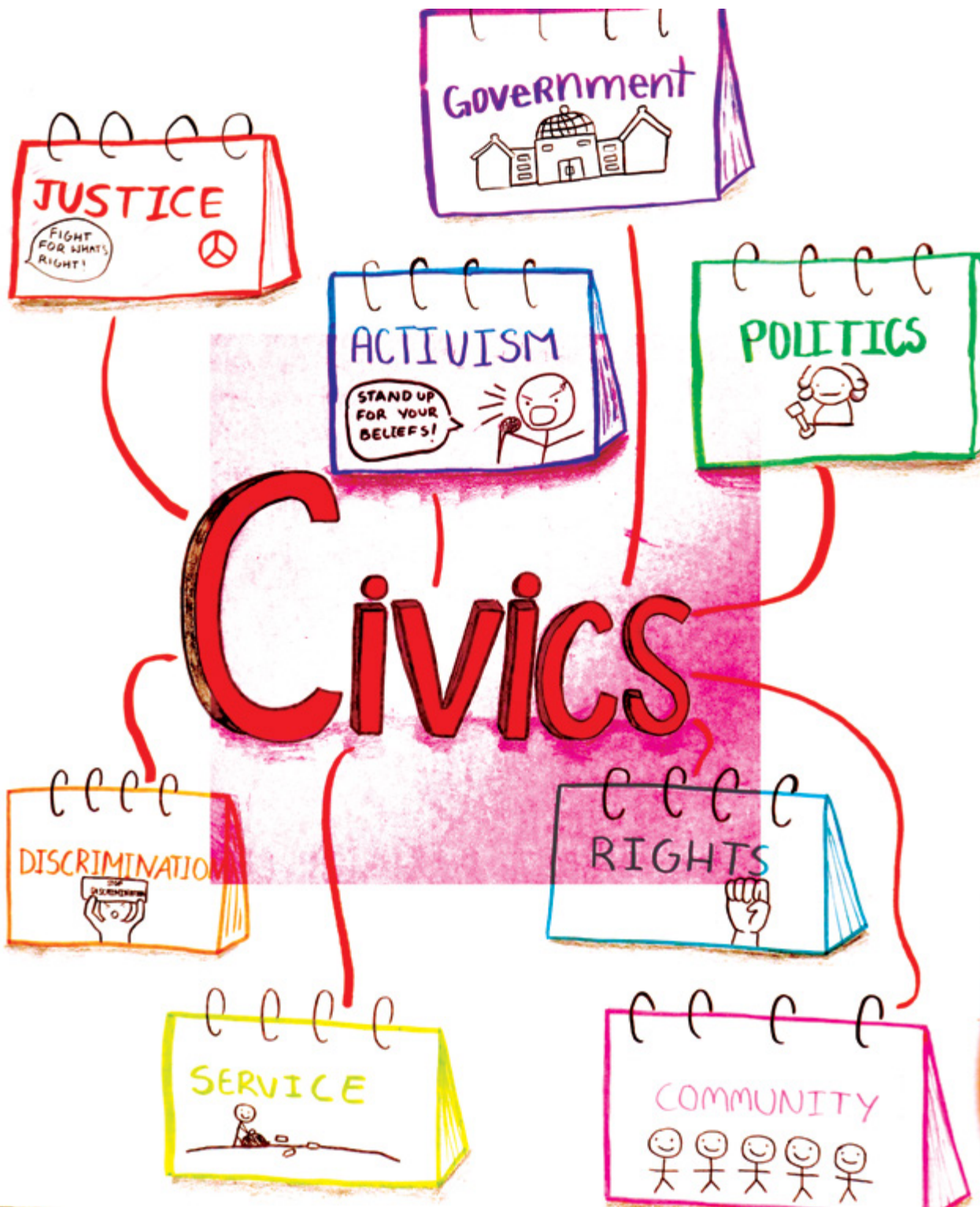
It is not easy to track long-term college completion rates for OneFuture participants. Last year, a consultant called Health Assessment and Research for Communities reviewed 2,273 student records that were available for OneFuture scholarship recipients, largely those who graduated from high school since 2010. It found that 1,401 — or 61 percent — earned a degree of some kind, including associate's degrees and industry certificates. Among degree earners, 83 percent earned at least a bachelor's and 12 percent earned a master's degree.

By the report's data, OneFuture alumni on average fared better than low-income peers nationwide. The Pell Institute, for example, finds only 15 percent of students from the lowest income quartile complete four-year college degrees by age 24, compared to 59 percent from the highest quartile.

Challenges abound for OneFuture. Those involved say routine turnover in leadership positions can slow progress. Funders often don't pay for the glue that keeps people working together, such as the organizational staff it takes to push initiatives forward. Some employers need to be convinced that their investments *now* will lead — one day — to good hires for their own companies.

The stakes are high. Ken Wheat, chief operating officer for Eisenhower Health, estimates the valley needs approximately 400 new nurses a year in the pipeline. As the ranks of the area's retirees expand and get older, he said, the local health care industry's acute need for staff is "only going to grow exponentially."

"Educational outcomes contribute to a thriving regional economy," said Kelly May-Vollmar, superintendent of Desert Sands Unified School District. "Working with intention with our industry and community partners benefits everyone." ■



This article is illustrated with actual assignments by students participating in “Civic Engagement in Our Democracy,” a curriculum developed by the Democratic Knowledge Project. In 2018 Massachusetts passed bipartisan legislation mandating an eighth-grade civics class, and this yearlong course for Massachusetts eighth graders aims to help them “identify what they value, deepen what they understand, and develop what they can do to be self-caring, reciprocal, and self-confident changemakers.” The Democratic Knowledge Project is part of the Carnegie-supported Edmond & Lily Safra Center for Ethics at Harvard University, which among other projects is working to develop and pilot a renewed civics education curriculum.

CREDIT: COURTESY OF THE DEMOCRATIC KNOWLEDGE PROJECT, AN INITIATIVE OF THE EDMOND & LILY SAFRA CENTER FOR ETHICS AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY

INCREASING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT, STATE BY STATE

A selection of actual assignments by eighth-grade students in Massachusetts shows how civics classes can lead to informed and engaged citizenship

Funding for civic learning, both from philanthropy and government, is woefully inadequate. The United States invests just 5 cents in civic education for every 50 dollars that goes to education in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) subjects.

Current data on civic knowledge is just as alarming. The 2023 Annenberg Civics Knowledge Survey found that about one in six Americans could not name any of the three branches of the U.S. government, and most Americans could not name all of the rights protected under the First Amendment. Eighth graders' scores in civics registered their first decline since testing began in 1998, according to data from the 2023 National Assessment of Educational Progress.

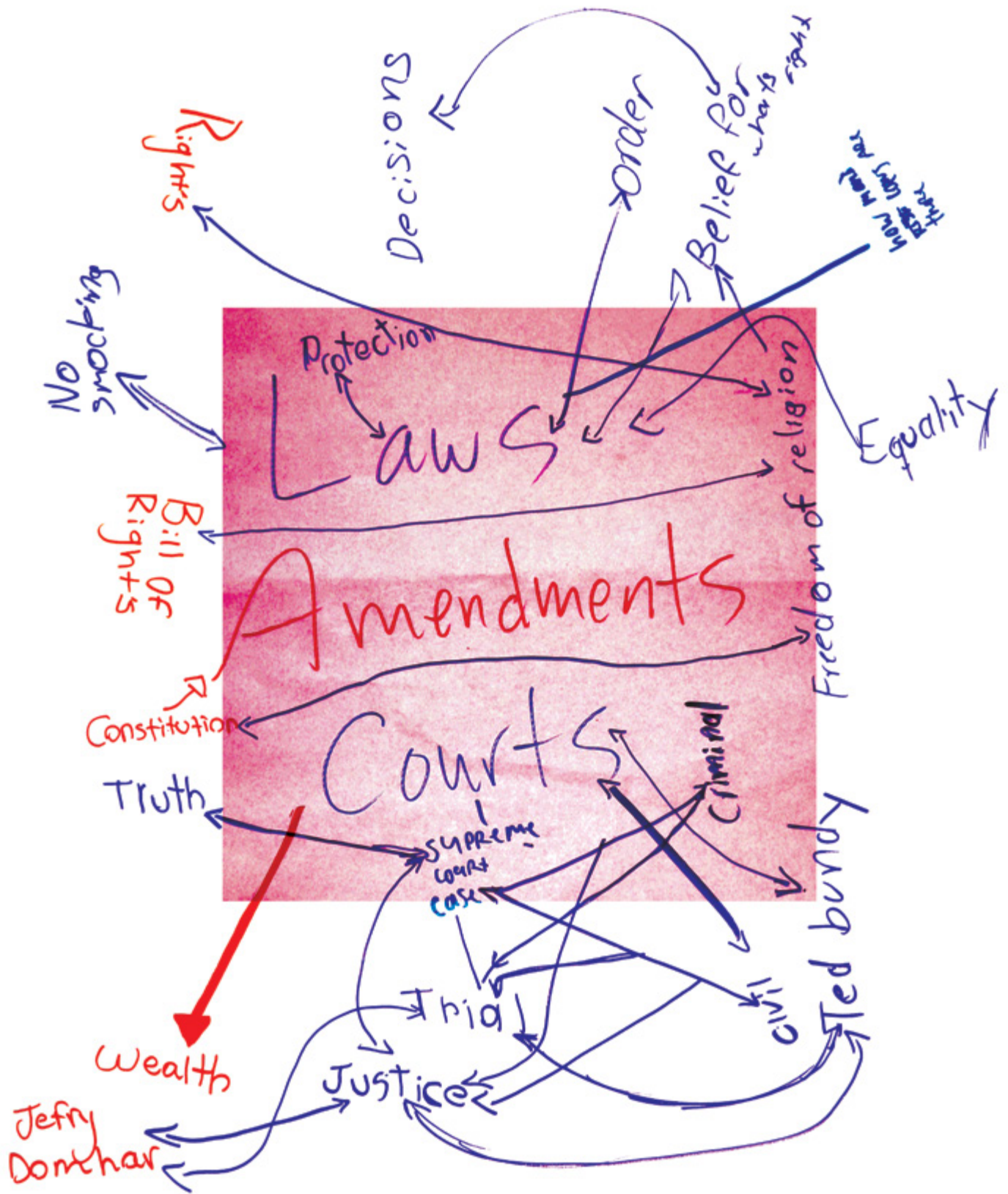
The need for accurate instruction on history and government has never been greater. And voters across parties agree. Fifty-nine percent of likely Republican voters and 74 percent of likely Democratic voters support more funding for civic education, according to a 2022 poll by iCivics and More Perfect.

Driven by the foundational belief that educated and engaged citizens are critical to a healthy democracy, Carnegie Corporation of New York has invested \$16.3 million in civic education over nearly three decades. In January 2024, the foundation gave a \$1.5 million grant

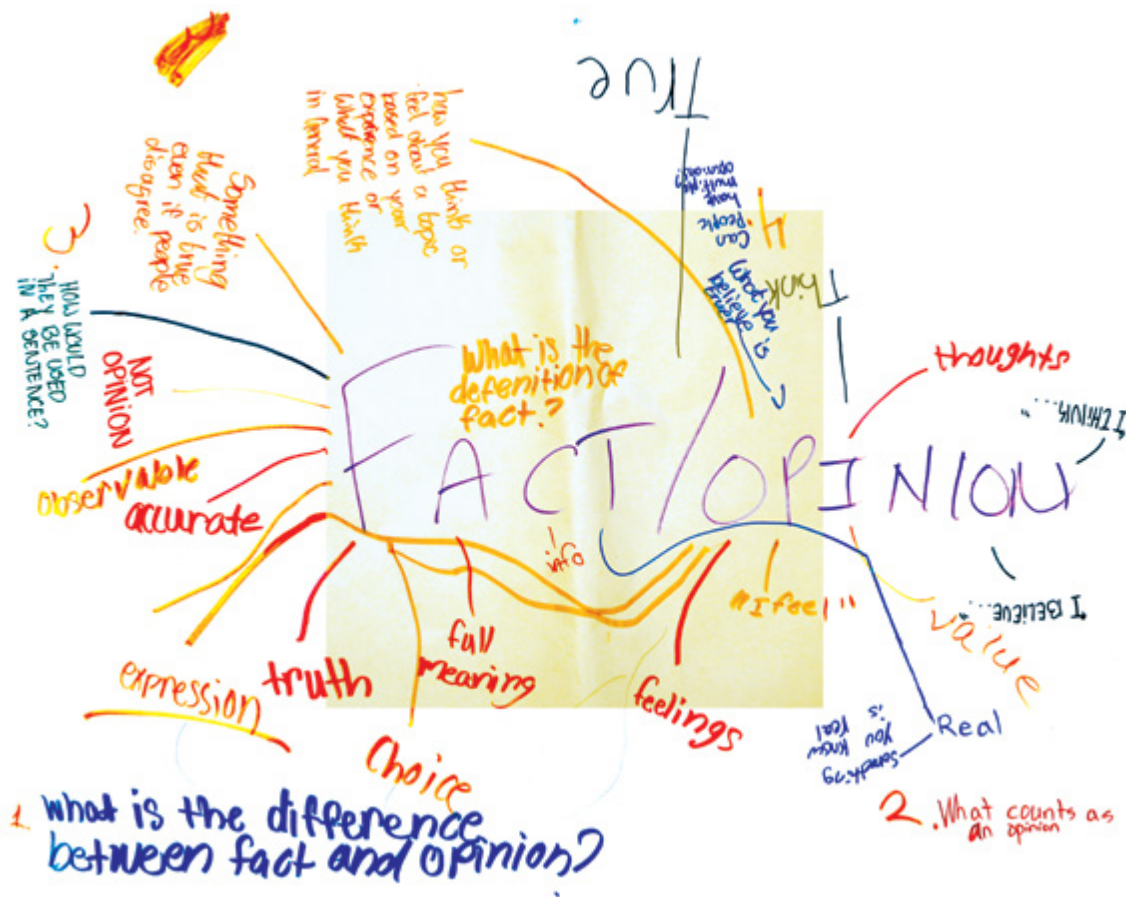
to support iCivics' CivXNow Coalition, which involves more than 320 cross-ideological partners throughout the country working to advance civic education policies at state and federal levels. Thanks to the strong advocacy of CivXNow Coalition members, states across the political spectrum have bolstered civic learning in recent legislative sessions, including in Georgia, Indiana, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Utah.

In 2018, Massachusetts led the way with bipartisan legislation mandating an eighth-grade civics class. The images accompanying this article are actual assignments by eighth-grade students participating in "Civic Engagement in Our Democracy," a curriculum developed by the Democratic Knowledge Project. The project is part of the Carnegie-supported Edmond & Lily Safra Center for Ethics at Harvard University, which among other projects is working to develop and pilot a renewed civics education curriculum.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to civic learning, and conservative, progressive, urban, rural, and otherwise diverse states have taken varied policy approaches to increase it. Carnegie recently published *Connecting Civic Education and a Healthy Democracy*, a report highlighting the need for state-level policies that expand and improve K–12 civic learning. Learn more at carnegie.org/CivicsPolicy. ■



Student assignment for the Democratic Knowledge Project's eighth-grade civics curriculum. CREDIT: COURTESY OF THE DEMOCRATIC KNOWLEDGE PROJECT, AN INITIATIVE OF THE EDMOND & LILY SAFRA CENTER FOR ETHICS AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY



Student assignment for the Democratic Knowledge Project’s eighth-grade civics curriculum. CREDIT: COURTESY OF THE DEMOCRATIC KNOWLEDGE PROJECT, AN INITIATIVE OF THE EDMOND & LILY SAFRA CENTER FOR ETHICS AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY

MEDIA LITERACY MEANS MORE THAN KNOWING HOW TO USE DIGITAL TOOLS

Whether you call it digital, information, news, visual, or media literacy — it is vital for civic engagement and democracy

By Faith Rogow

No facet of our lives is untouched by media. Our public spaces are infused with an unending cascade of media messages promoting an array of corporations, causes, candidates, events, and teams. Social media has reshaped our culture, even for those who never log on. And AI is making it easier than ever before for anyone to create content that feels real — even when it’s not.

This presents schools and educators with a new challenge. In this rapidly evolving digital world, literacy means more than knowing how to use digital tools. Powerful

computers now fit in the palms of our hands, and the resulting access to information and audiences requires new thinking and reasoning skills, not just knowledge of how to use a device or an app.

Yet media literacy education is a contested domain with divergent ideas about its purposes and best practices. While many educators have met the challenge with energy and creativity, a lack of school, district, or statewide coordination around media literacy education has left a dizzying array of practices and priorities. Some teachers dismiss media literacy education as extraneous or view it

as someone else's job. Some address media issues that are important to them, without considering the specific needs or experiences of the students they teach. The results create unnecessary repetition for some students while others receive no media literacy instruction at all. The status quo is a recipe for reinforcing existing inequities.

What is media literacy education?

Media literacy education teaches students to routinely apply critical inquiry, reading, and reflection skills to all forms of media that they encounter, use, and create. Rather than offering predetermined interpretations, educators ask students what they notice and then help them to develop the skills and knowledge to notice more, creating a space where everyone can think more deeply.

Just as media exists in all areas of our lives, media literacy can't be reduced to a single lesson or something that's separate from the rest of school. It can't be the job of one educator or librarian; it needs to be integrated into a student's entire education.

A lesson, activity, project, curriculum, or initiative is likely to meet the goals of media literacy education if it

- goes beyond merely using media to teach; media are used to help students acquire new or improved critical thinking skills.
- teaches students to ask their own questions about media messages rather than just responding to questions that the teacher asks.
- teaches students to ask questions of *all* media (not just the things that they find suspicious or objectionable, and not just screen or digital media but also printed media like books or posters).
- includes media representing diverse points of view (e.g., does not reduce complex debates to only two sides and/or actively seeks alternative media sources).
- encourages students to seek multiple sources of information and helps them learn to determine which sources are most appropriate or reliable for any given task.
- requires students to justify opinions or interpretations with specific, document-based evidence.
- seeks rich readings of texts, rather than asking people to arrive at a predetermined "true" or "correct" meaning.
- does not replace the investigative process with declarations about what a teacher or a cultural critic believes to be true.
- incorporates an examination of how media structures (e.g., ownership, sponsorship, or distribution) influence how people make meaning of media messages.

- teaches students to ask questions when they are making (not just analyzing) media, helping them to notice and evaluate their choices, and also to understand that their social media posts are media.

How is media literacy connected to civic engagement?

If a central purpose of schooling is to prepare future generations to exercise their civic responsibilities, then educators must encourage students to investigate rather than doubt media sources. They go from being consumers to interrogators of news and information.

The specific strategies of media literacy education are designed to provide students with the skills, knowledge, habits, and dispositions necessary to become the lifelong learners, critical and creative thinkers, effective communicators, and engaged, ethical community members and citizens needed to sustain a vibrant democracy in a digital world.

Media literacy students are given opportunities to hear diverse, evidence-based views. Freed from the need to convince others that there is only one right answer (and it must be theirs), students learn to engage in dialogue for the purpose of learning rather than winning. In the process, they learn about the lesson's subject matter and about one another. Speaking things out loud can lead to surprising and powerful insights.

It can also build community and lay a strong foundation for civic engagement. That's because, rather than uniform agreement, media literacy uses the process of logic and evidence-based inquiry as the group's common ground. So media literacy discussions provide excellent practice for living in a nation that values pluralism.

Media literacy skills involve an understanding that all media are constructed (that is, media messages are always the product of human choices), and demonstrate an understanding of how and why those choices are made. These are foundational, essential skills needed to navigate life in a digital world so that we can participate effectively as a citizen in a healthy democracy. They are not the only skills, just the starting point. ■

Faith Rogow is an independent scholar and the Media Literacy Education Maven at InsightersEducation.com, which she founded in 1996 to help people learn from media and one another. She has taught thousands of teachers, students, childcare professionals, media professionals, and parents and guardians to understand and harness the power of media.

This article is an edited excerpt from *Preparing for Civic Responsibility in Our Digital Age: A Framework for Educators to Ensure Media Literacy Education for Every Student* (2023), published by DemocracyReady NY, a nonpartisan coalition and a project of the Center for Educational Equity at Teachers College, Columbia University, and supported by Carnegie Corporation of New York.

HOW DO FOREIGN POLICY DECISIONS AFFECT LOCAL U.S. COMMUNITIES?

Four in 10 U.S. adults think foreign policy issues should be a top priority for the United States government in 2024

From improving climate data collection and surveying ethnic and racial divides on foreign policy to the risks to local communities of upgrading 450 land-based nuclear missile silos, Corporation grantees look at the domestic impact of foreign policy.

Four in 10 U.S. adults think foreign policy issues should be a top priority for the United States government in 2024, according to an AP-NORC poll. This is double the number reported in 2023. Meanwhile, for the first time in its 16-year history, the Council on Foreign Relations' 2024 Preventive Priorities Survey finds that the top conflict to watch in 2024 is not a foreign threat but the possibility of domestic terrorism and acts of political violence in the U.S., particularly around the 2024 presidential election.

With growing concerns about foreign policy issues and U.S. democracy, we invited five Carnegie Corporation of New York grantees — experts in the field of international peace and security whose foreign policy projects look at domestic impact — to respond (in approximately 100 words or fewer) to the question: **How do foreign policy decisions affect local U.S. communities?**

Alexandra Guisinger

Associate Professor, Temple University

Our project — Foreign Policy in a Diverse Society — explores how Americans perceive and engage with foreign economic policy. Many politicians have emphasized policies to support the American manufacturing sector and its workers via increased import restrictions and employment assistance for trade-affected workers. In a July 2023 survey of 3,000 Americans, we found a substantial ethnic and racial divide in expectations of these policies' benefits. Whites were far more likely to perceive that these policies would generally help their communities than other racial/ethnic groups and almost a third of Black respondents expressed concern that the policies would hurt their community.

Lillian Mauldin

Founding Board Member, Women for Weapons Trade Transparency

U.S. foreign policy decisions affect local communities every day in myriad ways. When the federal budget prioritizes investments in war and violence over investments in housing, education, transportation, and other critical infrastructure, U.S. residents experience threats and harms to their safety, well-being, and quality of life. Subsequently, spending on the export of weapons abroad generates militarization domestically as articles from drawdowns and excess equipment are sold or transferred to police departments through channels such as the 1033 and 1122 programs. U.S. lawmakers must be held accountable to their constituents' needs — exporting violence does not serve them.

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If foreign policy was once the sole purview of Washington, those days are long gone. Issues ranging from climate change to managing migration to global democratic backsliding directly impact the local level because they represent transnational threats and opportunities that cannot be contained to capitals.

– Jon Temin, Truman Center

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Sébastien Philippe

Research Scholar, Program on Science and Global Security,
Princeton University

The United States' decision to enhance its nuclear arsenal, as part of managing its strategic competition with Russia and China, carries significant risks for communities across the country. For instance, the U.S. is upgrading 450 land-based nuclear missile silos, each one designed to serve as a target for incoming enemy nuclear warheads. The idea is by raising the scale of a potential nuclear attack on American soil, it hopefully becomes too big to contemplate. However, this strategy turns areas surrounding deployment sites into sacrifice zones, putting local communities at deliberate risk of devastation and long-term contamination should an attack occur.

Jon Temin

Vice President of Policy and Programs, Truman Center

If foreign policy was once the sole purview of Washington, those days are long gone. Issues ranging from climate change to managing migration to global democratic backsliding directly impact the local level because they represent transnational threats and opportunities that cannot be contained to capitals. The challenge, however, is that too often, foreign policy decision-making is not informed by inputs from local leaders — and lack of diverse inputs produces policies that don't address local needs or capture good ideas originating outside Washington. Fixing this dynamic will yield better policies, and citizens will increasingly see their views reflected in foreign policy.

Martin Wainstein

Executive Director, Open Earth Foundation

Foreign policy decisions, including environmental actions like commitments to a 1.5°C world, can profoundly affect local U.S. communities. Initiatives to combat climate change can generate jobs, stimulate economic growth through a transition to a green economy, and influence global environmental standards. Furthermore, U.S. foreign policy has cultural ramifications; it can shape public perception and attitudes, potentially influencing levels of xenophobia, racism, or individualism within local communities. By setting an example internationally, U.S. foreign policy can sway domestic and global consciousness toward more sustainable and inclusive values. ■

TRACKING WAR'S DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACTS ON WOMEN

Women have been largely sidelined from negotiations, even as they bear the brunt of violence. Where are conditions for women worsening, improving, or static?

By **Wilfred Chan**

Days before the October 7, 2024, attacks, thousands of Israeli and Palestinian women met in Jerusalem to talk about peace. They were part of two groups — Israel’s Women Wage Peace and Palestine’s Women of the Sun — that have convened for decades to call for an end to armed conflict in the region.

But in the war since then, women have been largely sidelined from negotiations, even as they bear the brunt of violence.

A new tool called the Women, Peace and Security Conflict Tracker aims to fill a long-standing gap among conflict trackers that are used by policymakers and advocates to monitor and respond to global armed conflicts. Launched in March 2024 by the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security (GIWPS) with funding from Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Embassy of Denmark in Washington, D.C., the tracker is the first of its kind to examine conflict through the lens of gender, said Jessica Anania, its lead research fellow who led its development. Currently monitoring 25 conflict-affected countries, the tracker aims to highlight the disproportionate impact that women bear in armed conflict, but also their pivotal roles in preventing and recovering from conflicts.

“Women are never the initiators of armed conflict and invariably its victims,” said Dame Louise Richardson, president of the Corporation, “yet the impact of global armed conflict on women is underanalyzed and the role of women in peacemaking is underappreciated.”

The tracker evaluates countries against the principles of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, established in 2000 by the UN Security Council’s landmark Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325), which called upon member states to respond to conflicts’ disproportionate impacts on women and to empower women to play a greater role in preventing and responding to conflict. UN research has shown that women’s participation increases the probability of a peace agreement lasting at least two years by 20 percent, and the probability of it lasting 15 years by 35 percent.

“Peace agreements that include women are more likely to last longer; negotiations that include women are more likely to reach agreement,” Anania said. “Women are also doing a lot of the frontline response when it comes to community outreach, helping displaced populations, securing food, and collecting and documenting evidence of sexual violence. They play a really important role at every single stage of responding to and moving forward from conflict.”

Women’s security and well-being is “worsening” in more than half of the 25 countries tracked by GIWPS, based on information collected by the research team, from the rates of conflict-related sexual violence and the participation rates of women in peace processes, to firsthand accounts from local women leaders and other factors. Other countries are ranked as “static” or “improving” even though risks and severe issues still exist. “We’re not just looking at what already impacts women,” she said. “We’re looking at the conflict dynamics to understand how they could affect women and gender broadly.”



A woman takes part in a February 2024 demonstration in Bogotá, Colombia, against the murders of human rights activists and signatories to the country's historic 2016 peace accord. Women have played a key role in the country's peace process, but still face serious threats there.

CREDIT: JUAN PABLO PINO/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Leaders and experts say the tracker raises needed awareness of women, peace, and security issues.

“The WPS Conflict Tracker is one of many important data tools that can be used by governments in their work toward implementing the WPS Agenda as defined by UNSCR 1325,” said Jesper Møller Sørensen, Denmark’s ambassador to the United States.

“The role of women in preventing conflict, building peace, addressing global threats, and other national and transnational challenges is both underappreciated and under-understood,” said Deana Arsenian, vice president of the Corporation’s International Program and program director for Russia and Eurasia. “Elevating and advancing awareness about the role and status of women in peace and security is an essential element in addressing today’s complex global problems.”

Here are three examples of countries tracked by the new conflict monitoring tool:

Kosovo

During the 1998–99 war in Kosovo, Serbian forces systematically used rape and sexual violence as a weapon against Kosovo Albanian women. In 2014, after years of advocacy, the Kosovo Assembly passed a historic law granting legal recognition and financial reparations, which the government began implementing in 2017, to survivors of sexual and gender-based violence.

While fewer women than hoped have registered for reparations under Kosovo’s long-awaited survivors’ law amid continued stigma, the program nonetheless offers a model for other countries looking at reparations.

As of June 2024, Kosovo was ranked as “static” because “we are not seeing huge fluctuations in terms of the trajectory,” Anania said. But, she cautioned, “a country can be static and still be facing severe issues.” Amid regional tension, there is a specter of resurgent fighting. “Any renewed violence could lead to a direct threat to women’s stability and physical security,” says Anania, “given the recent legacy of gendered conflict dynamics and weaponized uses of sexual violence.”

Colombia

Colombia’s historic 2016 peace accord focused strongly on women’s rights and needs, including accountability and reparations for sexual violence, support for rebuilding communities, and increased gender sensitivity at all levels of society. Since then, the country has made progress toward its first-ever National Action Plan on women, peace, and security, which has been developed in consultation with women’s groups across the country and is expected to pass this year.

At the tracker’s launch in March, Colombia was one of the few conflict-affected countries that the researchers rated as “improving” in terms of women’s well-being and security. In June 2024, the GIWPS research team reclassified the country’s trajectory as “static” amid renewed violence, including the assassination of a female indigenous activist by a dissident rebel group, leading the government to suspend its ceasefire with the group in parts of the country.

The tracker notes: “Gender-relevant stipulations of the 2016 Peace Agreement remain under-implemented, inhibiting accountability and relief for Colombian women and the reintegration of female combatants.”

Israel / Palestine

An estimated 63 women have been killed each day since the war in Gaza began last October, according to UN statistics. Data examined by the GIWPS research team shows that women there are disproportionately impacted by air strikes, health tolls, and displacement crises. In February, UN experts called for an investigation into credible allegations of Palestinian women and girls being deliberately targeted for extrajudicial executions, arbitrary detention, and sexual assault.

Conflict-related sexual violence, including rape, occurred in multiple locations during the Hamas-led terror attacks on Israel, according to UN experts, and in March, the UN reported that Israeli women taken hostage in Gaza have been subjected to sexual violence that may be ongoing.

As food insecurity worsens, 9 in 10 women in Gaza say it is harder for them to access food compared to men, a UN survey has found. Tens of thousands of women are experiencing health complications as Gaza’s hospitals are forced to close, and miscarriages in the region have reportedly increased 300 percent since the war’s start.

At the same time, “we are seeing women excluded from official talks, and we are not seeing women brought comprehensively to the table,” Anania says. Nonetheless, women in the region — including the groups that met shortly before October 7 — remain “very active” despite losing members to violence. “I think their efforts and their leadership are an untapped resource for any talks around negotiated solutions,” said Anania.

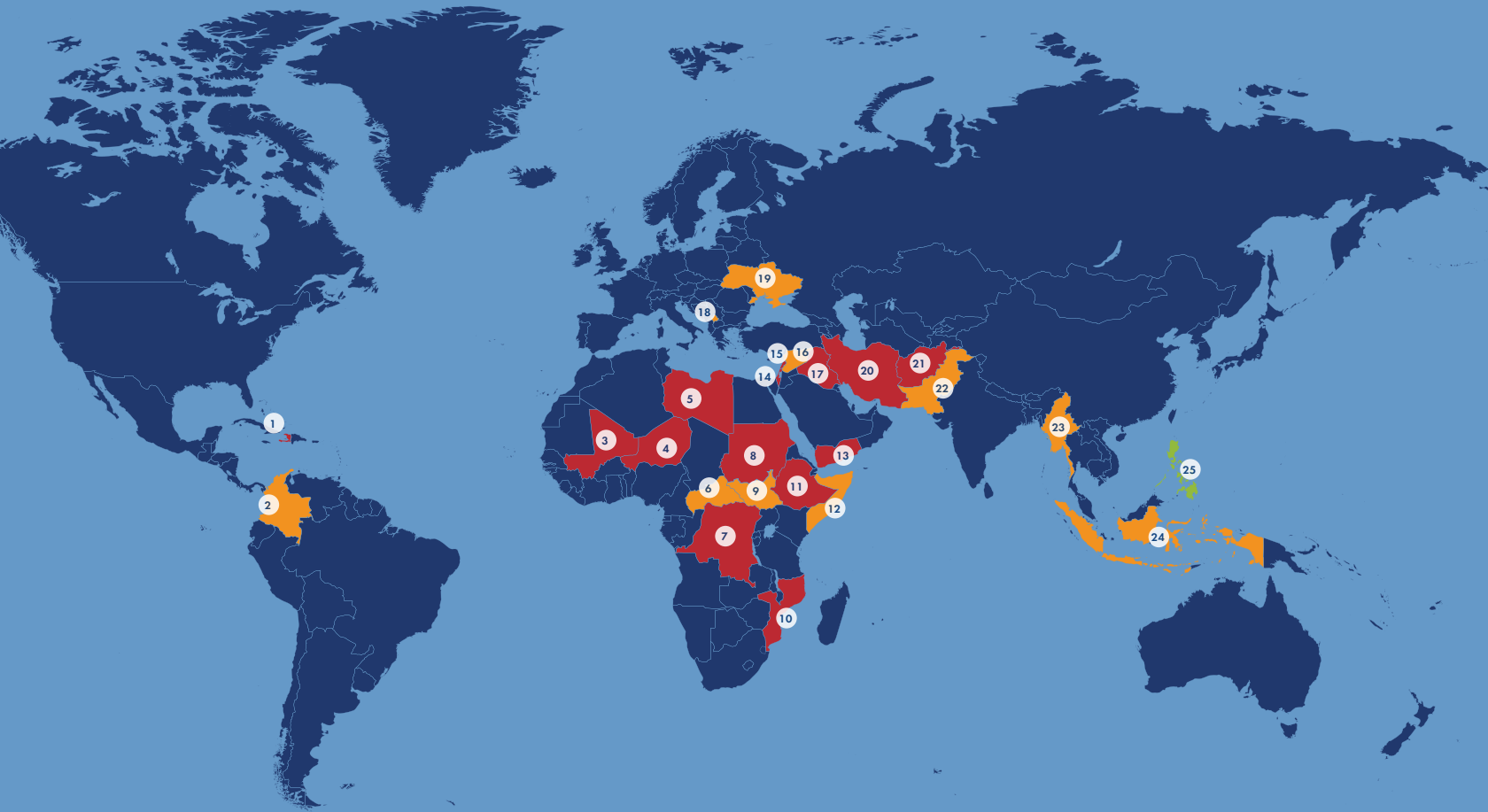
The Women, Peace and Security Conflict Tracker monitors rapidly changing conflicts. To view countries’ updated trajectories, visit the interactive tool at wpsconflicttracker.com ■

Wilfred Chan is the senior content editor and writer at Carnegie Corporation of New York.

IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED COUNTRIES, ARE THE CONDITIONS FOR WOMEN

WORSENING , **STATIC** , OR **IMPROVING** ?

As of June 2024



The Women, Peace and Security Conflict Tracker, a new tool by the Georgetown Institute of Women, Peace and Security, currently monitors the conditions for women in 25 conflict-affected countries. Women's security and well-being is "worsening" in more than half of the 25 tracked countries, while other countries are ranked as "static" or "improving" even though risks and severe issues still exist. View the updated and interactive tracker at wpsconflicttracker.com

- 1 Haiti
- 2 Colombia
- 3 Mali
- 4 Niger
- 5 Libya
- 6 Central African Republic
- 7 Democratic Republic of Congo
- 8 Sudan
- 9 South Sudan
- 10 Mozambique
- 11 Ethiopia
- 12 Somalia
- 13 Yemen
- 14 Israel & Palestine
- 15 Lebanon
- 16 Syria
- 17 Iraq
- 18 Kosovo
- 19 Ukraine
- 20 Iran
- 21 Afghanistan
- 22 Pakistan
- 23 Myanmar
- 24 Indonesia
- 25 Philippines

RUSSIAN STUDIES GRAPPLES WITH THE WAR IN UKRAINE

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has led to the most significant crisis in Russian studies since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Here's what can be done about it

By **Wilfred Chan**

Russia scholars based in the United States faced headwinds years before Vladimir Putin's 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Tensions after Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea, Russia's growing suppression of academic freedom, and pandemic restrictions had made it increasingly difficult for Russia scholars to travel and conduct research within the country. The challenges were compounded by declining numbers of U.S. graduate students and faculty specializing in Russia — and narrowing career prospects for those who did.

Those setbacks have worsened to a crisis following Russia's attack on Kyiv, according to an assessment, *The State of Russian Studies in the United States: 2022*, published in 2023 by the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies with support from Carnegie Corporation of New York. The foundation has sought since 1948 to improve the understanding of the Soviet Union and then of Russia by expanding the number of relevant scholars, analysts, and practitioners through its Euro-Atlantic Security subprogram.

The assessment found through surveys and interviews with academics that Russia's war in Ukraine and subsequent crackdown on domestic dissent have made it nearly impossible to conduct research in Russia — throwing the U.S.-based fields of Russian, Slavic, and Eurasian studies into “considerable turmoil” and leaving scholars “reeling.”

According to the report, out of nearly 300 U.S.-based Russia researchers, 89 percent said the war would have a “very negative” impact on their ability to conduct research on Russia going forward, and 86 percent said the war would have a negative impact on the ability for U.S.-based scholars to collaborate with Russia-based colleagues.

Russia's invasion has accelerated a long-standing process of political polarization of views on Russia in the United States, causing scholars to “despair,” according to the assessment, of the chances of having nuanced discussions with policymakers. Some researchers also noted a worrying trend of academic journals and conferences applying litmus tests to reject any scholarship that might in any way be construed as supportive or even neutral toward Russia.

These challenges have significantly impacted the production of scholarship on Russia by U.S.-based academics. Forty-four percent of scholars surveyed had abandoned or suspended their current research projects in part due to Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, the assessment found, and 36 percent said the war had influenced them to shift their research interests away from Russia and toward other countries. Sixty-five percent believed the war would have a negative impact on the inflow of Russia-focused PhD students.

Still, the association noted signs of hope for the field. Academics have found innovative techniques to obtain data on Russia — such as social media studies, digital



A destroyed library in Chernihiv, Ukraine, in 2022. CREDIT: CELESTINO ARCE/NURPHOTO VIA GETTY IMAGES

ethnography, and virtual interviews — and are developing new methods of sharing it with other researchers. Additionally, a growing movement to “decolonize” Slavic and Eurasian studies by focusing less on Russia also promises to expand the fields’ horizons.

The State of Russian Studies report outlines five key goals for scholars, donors, and stakeholders to strengthen and preserve research and graduate training on Russia:

1. Maintain as much access as possible to data on Russian history, culture, economy, politics, and society by making existing data more widely available and developing new approaches.
2. Protect Russian scholars in exile and provide them with the means to continue their scholarship and teaching.
3. Continue to educate the American public and policymaking community about Russia’s complexity.
4. Embrace the various aims of those who call for decolonizing Slavic/Eurasian studies and work to engage constructively with the corresponding debates and discussions.
5. Help young scholars enter the field. ■

Wilfred Chan is the senior content editor and writer at Carnegie Corporation of New York.

Scholarship with Impact

Since 2015, the Andrew Carnegie Fellows Program has awarded fellowships annually to exceptional scholars, authors, journalists, and public intellectuals, with criteria to prioritize the originality and promise of the research and its potential impact on the field, and the scholar's plans for communicating the findings to a broad audience. Here is a small selection of some of the notable books that have come out of the program.



Jeff Kosseff

(2019 Andrew Carnegie Fellow)

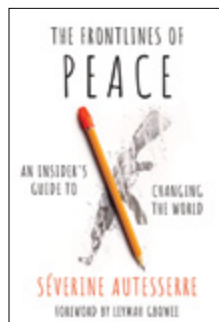
Liar in a Crowded Theater: Freedom of Speech in a World of Misinformation

Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2023

Finalist for the 2024 Silver Gavel Award by the American Bar Association

Associate professor of cybersecurity law at the United

States Naval Academy, Jeff Kosseff addresses the pervasiveness of lies, the legal protections they enjoy, the harm they cause, and how to combat them, arguing that even though lies can inflict huge damage, U.S. law should continue to protect them. Drawing on years of research and thousands of pages of court documents in dozens of cases — from Alexander Hamilton's enduring defense of free speech to Eminem's victory in a lawsuit claiming that he stretched the truth in a 1999 song — Kosseff illustrates not only why courts are reluctant to be the arbiters of truth but also why they're uniquely unsuited to that role. Rather than resorting to regulating speech and fining or jailing speakers, he proposes solutions that focus on minimizing the harms of misinformation. *Liar in a Crowded Theater* explores both the history of protected falsehoods and where to go from here.



Séverine Autesserre

(2016 Andrew Carnegie Fellow)

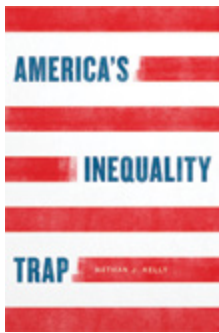
The Frontlines of Peace: An Insider's Guide to Changing the World

Foreword by Leymah Gbowee, 2011 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and Carnegie Corporation of New York Trustee

New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2021.

Shortlisted for the 2022 Book of the Year Prize, Conflict Research Society

The Frontlines of Peace draws on in-depth field research in 12 different conflict zones, comparisons with social initiatives in North America and Europe, and interviews with peacebuilders, warlords, victims, survivors, politicians, and local civilians. Séverine Autesserre, professor and chair of political science at Barnard College and a leading authority on peacebuilding with over 20 years of experience working in and conducting research on international aid throughout the world, examines the well-intentioned but inherently flawed peace industry. She focuses on success stories in an ultimately positive and hopeful narrative that encourages readers of all backgrounds to create peace in their own communities. This is the story of the ordinary yet extraordinary people who have figured out how to build lasting peace in their communities — one that challenges popular beliefs and scholarly ideas about war, peace, and conflict resolution that the diplomatic elite and the general public alike take as fact.



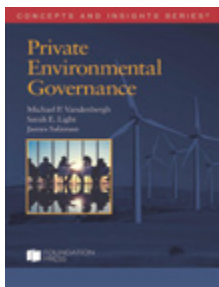
Nathan J. Kelly

(2017 Andrew Carnegie Fellow)

America's Inequality Trap

Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2020

The gap between the rich and the poor has grown dramatically in the United States and is now at its widest since at least the early 1900s. Nathan J. Kelly, professor of political science at the University of Tennessee, argues that rising concentrations of wealth create a political climate that makes it more difficult to reduce economic inequality. He shows that when a small fraction of the people control most of the economic resources, they also hold a disproportionate amount of political power, hurtling us toward a self-perpetuating plutocracy — or an “inequality trap.” Among other things, the rich support a broad political campaign that convinces voters that policies to reduce inequality are unwise and not in the interest of the average voter, regardless of the real economic impact. A key implication of *America's Inequality Trap* is that social policies designed to combat inequality should work hand in hand with political reforms that enhance democratic governance and efforts to fight racism.



Michael P. Vandenberg

(2022 Andrew Carnegie Fellow)

Private Environmental Governance

With Sarah E. Light and James Salzman

Eagan, MN: Foundation Press, 2023

The field of environmental law and policy is evolving and growing in importance as climate change, toxics, biodiversity, environmental justice, and other topics become increasingly central to public debates, classrooms, and careers. In the last decade, private environmental governance has exploded in response to public demands for corporate action that helps the planet and over frustration with government gridlock. Private environmental governance is now an accepted and powerful environmental policy tool, from corporate sustainability and ESG goals to seafood and forest certification systems, and from net zero emissions to land trusts. *Private Environmental Governance* provides the first user-friendly and comprehensive guide to these innovative new approaches that go farther than government regulation. As Vanderbilt Law School professor Michael P. Vandenberg and his coauthors demonstrate in this book, to understand the future of environmental policy in the 21st century, one needs to understand the actors, strategies, and challenges central to private environmental governance.



H. Luke Shaefer

(2020 Andrew Carnegie Fellow)

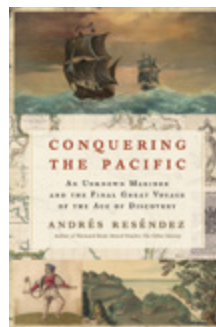
The Injustice of Place: Uncovering the Legacy of Poverty in America

With Kathryn J. Edin and Timothy J. Nelson

New York, NY: Mariner Books, 2023

Starred reviews in *Kirkus Reviews* and *Publishers Weekly*

Based on a fresh, data-driven approach, H. Luke Shaefer and his coauthors discover that America's most disadvantaged communities are not the big cities that get the most notice. Instead, nearly all are rural. Little if any attention has been paid to these places or to the people who make their lives there. This revelation set in motion a five-year journey across Appalachia, the Cotton and Tobacco Belts of the Deep South, and South Texas. Immersing themselves in these communities, poring over centuries of local history, attending parades and festivals, the authors trace the legacies of the deepest poverty in America — including inequalities shaping people's health, livelihoods, and upward social mobility for families. Wrung dry by powerful forces and corrupt government officials, the “internal colonies” in these regions were exploited for their resources and then left to collapse. A professor of public policy at the University of Michigan, Shaefer is coauthor (with Kathryn J. Edin) of the acclaimed *\$2.00 a Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America* (2015).



Andrés Reséndez

(2020 Andrew Carnegie Fellow)

Conquering the Pacific: An Unknown Mariner and the Final Great Voyage of the Age of Discovery

Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2021

Acclaimed University of California Davis historian Andrés Reséndez uncovers the story of a voyage as colorful as any on record for the Age of Discovery — and of the Black mariner whose stunning accomplishment has been until now lost to history. Through riveting storytelling — including an astonishing outcome for the resilient Lope Martín — Reséndez sets the record straight. It began with a secret mission, no expenses spared. Spain, plotting to break Portugal's monopoly trade with the fabled Orient, set sail from a hidden Mexican port to cross the Pacific — and then, critically, to attempt the never-before-accomplished return, the *vuelta*. Four ships set out from Navidad, each one carrying a dream team of navigators. The smallest ship was guided by seaman Lope Martín, a *mulatto* who had risen through the ranks to become one of the most qualified pilots of the era. It was the beginning of a voyage of epic scope, featuring mutiny, murderous encounters with Pacific Islanders, great physical hardships — and at last a triumphant return to the New World. ■

NOTABLE EVENTS

What's Happening in Our Community



Irish History in Manuscript “The prouince of Meathe” — a map of the ancient Irish province of Meath (“the middle kingdom”) — drawn and colored by hand and dating from ca. 1590. The city of “Dubline” can be spotted at lower left. This map, fancifully enlivened with dolphins or other large fish jumping from the Irish Sea, is part of “An Account of Ireland,” an important illuminated manuscript digitized by the Library of Trinity College Dublin with the support of Carnegie Corporation of New York. CREDIT: BOARD OF TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN



The choral ensemble Schola Hyberniae performed a chant from the 15th-century Clondalkin Breviary at the launch event in the Long Hall at Trinity College Library on November 30, 2023. The music was transcribed from medieval notation into modern musical notation and prepared for performance and wider scholarly study by Ann Buckley from the Medieval History Research Centre at Trinity College Dublin. The Clondalkin Breviary is one of only a handful of manuscripts containing musical notation to survive from medieval Ireland and is one of the manuscripts conserved, digitized, and now freely available to the public, thanks in part to the philanthropic support of Carnegie Corporation of New York. CREDIT: BOARD OF TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Virtual Trinity Library: The Book of Kells Is Only the Beginning

While the Book of Kells is Trinity's best-known medieval manuscript, the Library of Trinity College Dublin is also home to 600 other precious medieval manuscripts dating from the fifth to the 16th centuries with origins across western Europe. Sixty of these manuscripts have been conserved and digitized, rendered as 16,000 high-quality images, and are now available freely to the public as part of the Library's Manuscripts for Medieval Studies Project, which was celebrated at a launch event in the Long Room at the Library of Trinity College Dublin on November 30, 2023. Thus began a two-day conference hosted by Trinity, "The Many Lives of Medieval Manuscripts," which showcased research outputs arising from the digitization of these manuscripts, including research papers on the conservation of vellum manuscripts and using AI to transcribe medieval manuscripts.

The material of the Medieval Studies Project illuminates the social, creative, medicinal, and culinary culture of medieval Europe, forming part of the Virtual Trinity Library program, a digitization initiative of the Library of Trinity College Dublin's most valued collections. Support for the project was provided by philanthropic grants from Carnegie Corporation of New York, a continuation of the foundation's long-running funding of digitization efforts at major research and educational institutions, including the Bodleian Library at the University of Oxford, Carnegie Hall, the New York Public Library, New York University, the Richelieu Library, and Gladstone's Library.

At the launch event, Dame Louise Richardson, president of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, said, "The founder of Carnegie Corporation of New York, Andrew Carnegie, often said that books contain the treasures of the world. Over 140 years ago, he began funding libraries in the belief that providing a library exceeds anything else a community can do to help its people."

Commenting on the significance of the project, Trinity College librarian and college archivist Helen Shenton said, "For the first time in their existence, these exquisite manuscripts can now be viewed digitally by anyone. As part of the Virtual Trinity Library's Manuscripts for Medieval Studies Project, they are part of teaching and research at Trinity College Dublin and foster international collaboration with other universities and libraries."

Andrew Carnegie believed deeply in libraries as a means of making information and education freely available and accessible to anyone. "Today our foundation honors that legacy by supporting Trinity College Dublin's role in preserving knowledge for future generations," said Richardson. "Through the careful restoration and digitization of medieval manuscripts, these cultural artifacts will be accessible to both the curious and the scholarly for the benefit of us all."

As the Bodleian Library's Richard Ovenden has pointed out, "Preservation of knowledge is fundamentally not about the past but the future."



The New York Public Library's Vartan Gregorian Center for Research in the Humanities is dedicated to engaging, inspiring, supporting, and connecting a growing community of scholars with each other and with the library's world-class collections. The 8,000-square-foot space provides a research center for up to 400 researchers, including 40 scholars on paid fellowships. CREDIT: NYPL/JONATHAN BLANC



In January Dame Louise Richardson talked about freedom of expression on campus at "Informed 2024: Conversations on Democracy in the Digital Age." From left to right: the Aspen Institute's Vivian Schiller, Richardson, and writer Thomas Chatterton Williams. CREDIT: MARCO ANTONIO BELLO FOR KNIGHT FOUNDATION

HE LOVED LIBRARIES

Honoring Vartan Gregorian

On November 15, 2023, the New York Public Library dedicated its newly renovated Center for Research in the Humanities to Vartan Gregorian during a ceremony at its flagship building in Midtown Manhattan. Gregorian is credited with restoring and revitalizing — structurally, fiscally, and reputationally — the library while he served as president from 1981 to 1989, helping it become one of the nation's greatest civic and educational institutions. Gregorian went on to serve as president of Brown University and then as president of Carnegie Corporation of New York for 24 years until his death in April 2021.

With a \$5 million foundational grant from the Corporation, the new center honors Gregorian's dedication to scholarship and learning as well as his impact on the library and its patrons. "If you knew Vartan, you know that he loved libraries, as Andrew Carnegie did before him," said Dame Louise Richardson, president of Carnegie Corporation of New York. "I cannot think of a more fitting tribute than a space for scholars to allow their imaginations to take flight amidst the extraordinary resources of this great library."

OPEN YOUR MINDS

Speech on Campus

Corporation president Dame Louise Richardson joined writer Thomas Chatterton Williams at Knight Foundation's Informed 2024 for a wide-ranging conversation on "Polarization, Freedom of Expression, and Dissent," moderated by Vivian Schiller, vice president and executive director of Aspen Digital at the Aspen Institute. Richardson, the former vice-chancellor of the University of Oxford, noted her long-held position that "all legal speech should be welcomed on campus." Richardson said universities risk backlash if their policies on speech change suddenly, and advised new university leaders to "be unambiguous from the beginning." Students should expect to encounter and engage with ideas that make them feel uncomfortable, Richardson added.



Carnegie Corporation of New York’s Deana Arsenian (front row, left) and Dame Louise Richardson (front row, third from left) joined staff of the Consortium for Advanced Research Training in Africa (CARTA) in front of their building in Nairobi. CARTA’s executive director Catherine Kyobutungi stands between Arsenian and Richardson. CREDIT: CARTA



Dame Louise Richardson speaking on the barriers between scholarship and policymaking at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in April. As she told the audience, the Corporation’s Bridging the Gap program has been running since 2006 – and is designed specifically to dismantle those very barriers. CREDIT: KAVEH SARDARI OF SARDARI GROUP, INC

A TRIP TO AFRICA

Investing in African Individuals and Institutions

Senior Corporation staff — Dame Louise Richardson, president; Deana Arsenian, vice president, International Program; and Stephen Del Rosso, senior program director, International Peace and Security program — visited Nairobi, Kenya, in early February for meetings with Corporation grantees and other stakeholders in Africa’s higher education and peacebuilding sectors. According to Arsenian, the meetings supported the view that funding from outside sources, including the Corporation, is pivotal to the ambitious agendas of local actors striving to expand and deepen Africa’s higher education and peacebuilding sectors — sectors that will shape Africa’s future at a time when the knowledge economy and internal stability are essential drivers for any country’s prosperity.

The Corporation’s long-standing work in sub-Saharan Africa is the basis for continued investments in African individuals and institutions working toward a more peaceful and prosperous future. As the fastest-rising continent and increasingly an arena of major powers competition for influence and resources, African countries are experiencing significant growth in opportunities as well as challenges, including those associated with the economy and security. Arsenian stressed that “the former is linked to the dynamism of entrepreneurship and progress in many sectors, higher education among them.”

MAKING THE CASE FOR EXPERTISE Women Who Inspire

Carnegie Corporation of New York president Dame Louise Richardson spoke on “Removing Barriers between Scholarship and Policymaking” for the Condoleezza Rice Women Who Inspire Lecture Series at Johns Hopkins University in Washington, D.C., on April 18, 2024. The lecture, presented by the Foreign Policy Institute of the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, was followed by a conversation with moderator Shirin Tahir-Kheli and a Q&A with the audience. Richardson discussed the Corporation’s work on bridging the gap — connecting policymakers and scholars with the goal of making better policy based on evidence and in-depth dispassionate research.

Richardson was candid in her assessment: “My own view is that the single biggest impediment to interchange between scholarship and policymaking on the supply side is the promotion criteria used in academic departments. On the demand side, the biggest impediment is the polarization that is overtaking our politics.” Her conclusion was to the point: “Foundations, universities, think tanks ... all must make the case for expertise in service to the public good. We must demonstrate that our expertise is dispassionate, evidence-based, nonideological, and useful.” ■



DECODING POLARIZATION

What drives political polarization? These scholars will advance our understanding

Why do so many Americans appear to vote for candidates more extreme than themselves — or fail to vote at all? How do online algorithms exacerbate political polarization, and could we redesign them to lessen it?

These questions and more are part of 28 new projects funded by Carnegie Corporation of New York that will contribute to a body of research around political polarization in the United States. The philanthropic foundation will commit up to \$6 million annually to the program for at least the next three years. Each fellow will receive a stipend of \$200,000 to fund their research and share their discoveries widely.

“This initiative represents a commitment by the Corporation to mine academia for ideas that will help us to understand one of the most critical problems facing the country, the problem of polarization, which is tearing our society apart and damaging our democracy,” said Dame Louise Richardson, president of the Corporation.

The 2024 class is the current iteration of the Corporation’s long-standing support for scholarly research. Established in 2015, the Andrew Carnegie Fellows Program has supported more than 270 fellows with a total investment of more than \$54 million. Richardson, a political scientist, refocused the fellowship program on political polarization as one of her first initiatives after joining the Corporation in January 2023, as part of a larger effort to reduce political polarization through the foundation’s grantmaking.

Scan the QR code to learn more about this year’s Andrew Carnegie Fellows.





Delia S. Baldassarri
New York University



Taeku Lee
Harvard University



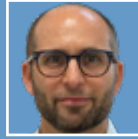
Neil A. O'Brian
University of Oregon



Seema Sohi
University of Colorado Boulder



David Brookman
University of California, Berkeley



Brett L. M. Levy
University at Albany, State
University of New York



Molly Offer-Westort
University of Chicago



Mara Suttman-Lea
Connecticut College



Lisa A. Bryant
California State University, Fresno



Neil Malhotra
Stanford Graduate School
of Business



Julianna Pacheco
University of Iowa



Chris Tausanovitch
University of California,
Los Angeles



Joshua D. Clinton
Vanderbilt University



Lilliana Mason
Johns Hopkins University



**Natalia Mehlman
Petrzela**
The New School



Dara M. Wald
Texas A&M University



Johanna Dunaway
Syracuse University Institute
for Democracy, Journalism and
Citizenship



Angie Maxwell
University of Arkansas



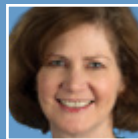
Markus Prior
Princeton University



Elise Wang
California State University,
Fullerton



Bernard L. Fraga
Emory University



Jennifer McCoy
Georgia State University



Brian F. Schaffner
Tufts University



David N. Wasserman
The Cook Political Report



D. Sunshine Hillygus
Duke University



Elizabeth McKenna
Harvard Kennedy School



Ananya Sen
Carnegie Mellon University



Hajar Yazdiha
University of Southern California



More than a century of support for libraries

Andrew Carnegie believed a free public library was the “best gift which can be given to a community,” and through his philanthropy built more than 2,500 libraries around the world.

For more than a century, Carnegie Corporation of New York has continued to support libraries in recognition of their vital role in strengthening our democracy and civic life. Every year since 2008, the foundation has honored exceptional librarians with the I Love My Librarian Award, in partnership with the American Library Association and the New York Public Library. Read the inspiring stories of this year’s 10 winners inside this issue, or scan the QR code below.

