



June 2020

Letter from the Chairman and President & CEO

Dear colleagues, neighbors, and friends,

Since the start of 2020, the world and our local communities have faced new and unprecedented challenges. The impacts of the Covid-19 crisis on the health and safety, financial security, and emotional wellbeing of our neighbors will inform every aspect of our grantmaking this year. In the first few months of this crisis, our immediate response followed a three-pronged approach:

1. We put strategies in place to maintain the core of work that has been our focus for nearly 25 years. As the lead funder of after-school programs for middle-school youth in New Britain, we made our funding more flexible to allow programs to adapt for the remainder of the school year. To ensure that critical programs continue to serve vulnerable youth, our board also allocated funding for summer programs and for the upcoming school year, totaling nearly \$900,000. We also relaxed restrictions for current grants across our broad spectrum of support in Education, Human Services, and the Arts. This allowed a wide range of agencies to respond to immediate and emerging needs.
2. We joined our philanthropic partners to support several local Covid-19 response funds. We also increased direct funding to basic needs programs that provide emergency food, energy assistance, and other forms of immediate response. Our grants towards basic needs and immediate response total over \$250,000 so far this year.
3. We understand that our Robert T. Kenney Scholars face tremendous disruption and uncertainty about their future. To assist these Scholars, we will automatically renew 263 current awards for next year, contingent on basic eligibility requirements. We also welcomed 103 new Scholars for the 2020-2021 academic year. Although we are not able to hold our annual scholarship reception this year, we look forward to working with all our Scholars virtually in the coming months.

We know that the impact of this global pandemic is yet to be fully understood, and that it may have a long-term impact on community needs and our grantmaking response. For the remainder of this year, we will work closely with current grantees to streamline our process and allow for as much flexibility as possible. We also expect to receive and respond to new requests for funding from agencies addressing emergent needs in the community, especially those that impact the wellbeing of children, youth, and families. More information about upcoming grant opportunities is available [here](#).

With recent events, we also must acknowledge and reflect on the pain of racism in America. We saw this pain reverberate across the country through recent demonstrations. We also saw it transform into hope through acts of kindness, courage, and love.

A primary focus of our grants and scholarship programs has always been to support those at the greatest economic risk, which we know are disproportionately those in communities of color. We also recognize that these communities have been most negatively impacted by the Covid-19 crisis.

Our staff and board promise to listen and learn from these events and strive to continuously improve our grantmaking, as we evolve to meet emerging challenges in the communities we serve.

That is our lasting commitment.