



2021

IMPACT
REPORT



A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Spring 2022

As we acknowledge the milestone of entering the third year of a global pandemic, we look toward another commemorative milestone in 2022 – The Connection’s centennial year.

This is a most ideal time for us to celebrate 100 years of service and leadership, and our community. We have forged through considerable challenges in the past, and this anniversary year will highlight and underscore our collective perseverance and commitment to individuals, families, and each other.

Even among restrictions in recent years, our community opened up more than ever. Our volunteers, staff, and members made it their priority to stay connected. And while tumultuous, these adversities have reconfirmed the pillars of our foundation; our mission to support mental, physical, and emotional wellness; our commitment to equity; and the people who help make it all possible—you.

We will continue to move forward to grow even stronger and more dynamic in our second century, and I look forward to celebrating with you through events, opportunities, and programs in the coming year. We will share more details soon, but in the meantime, please take a moment to help us start the celebration by sharing your thoughts via the enclosed postcard, and returning it by July 1.

On behalf of our entire community—thank you for participating in The Connection community. We are so grateful you are part of our deep history, and part of our exciting future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Wendy Graeb". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Wendy Graeb
Executive Director

HOW WE CONNECTED COMMUNITY

Nearly

500

Campers safely and happily participate in Summer Camp, which was offered through the entire pandemic

Pathways Cooks delivered

1,749

meals to women undergoing cancer treatments and to their families

Our community came together to raise

\$32K⁺

on Giving Day

Members kept moving in over

50

virtual and in-person classes each week

Our Benefit Committee (safely!) brought friends of The Connection together to raise over

\$245K

555

Donors supported The Connection

100

Volunteers continued and increased their support

“As a multilingual person, I believe that simply teaching grammar, spelling, and pronunciation is not always enough to learn a language, and through ESL I can also help teach the culture beyond the words.”

-Subhronil,
ESL Volunteer



A SPECIAL THANK YOU



Gary C. Butler Family Foundation

This partnership provided care and consistency to students and families through financial aid in our After School programs. We are honored to carry out the foundation's commitment to empowering youth and supporting women and families in our immediate community.



Lena Willis Mission Endowment Fund

Neighbors and partners in service, Central Church increased their support of our adult special needs members by ensuring these unique populations have access to tailored programming and a compassionate community that supports their highest quality of life—all with minimal cost to the individuals.

SEELAUS

A WOMEN-OWNED
BUSINESS ENTERPRISE

R. Seelaus & Co., Inc.

R. Seelaus & Co., Inc. extended their mutual commitment to children, women, and families by becoming our Lead Corporate Partner. Their increased leadership and support helped remedy the challenges of the pandemic by making opportunities and support possible in a most critical time. We are proud that the firm and its employees are part of The Connection community.



The Summit Foundation

The Summit Foundation continues to be here for good by supporting members participating in The Connection's youth programs for special populations. Together, we continued our deep history of providing specialized programs hosted in a barrier-free and welcoming environment.

2021 DONORS

Endowing Benefactors (\$10,000+)

Barberry Foundation
Ann C.* and Joseph W. Berkery
Gary C. Butler Foundation
Central Presbyterian Church Endowment Fund
Rachel & Tom Cortese Family Fund
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R. Seelaus & Co., Inc.
State of New Jersey
Marianne** and Robert Suffern
Summit Foundation
The Tyler Foundation
Maria* and Evan Williams

Founding Benefactors (\$5,000-9,999)

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Tara Ferris* and Mark Negus
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The Rhoten Family Fund
Richland Management
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Wish You Well Foundation
The Raymond and Nora Wong Family Fund

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2021 DONORS

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June* and Robert Wessel
Stephanie and Aaron Wilson

Supporting Benefactors (\$500-999)

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Yukiko Shuya and William E. Thar
Susan Siberine
Eileen and Andrew Sullivan
Betsy and Toby Wesson



"We appreciate you and the whole staff so much. Our camper is working through our transition to a new home, with new friends, new teachers, and so many more changes. It is a big blessing to have the whole Connection team help him thrive."

- Summer Camp Parent

2021 DONORS

Benefactors (\$250-499)

Aimee and Scott Artzer
Miyoko Balogh
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Fund
Peter E. Upton Charitable Fund
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Kelly Walk
Judith McCarthy and Mike Walsh
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Connection Staff

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Anita Beechner
Bulbul Bhattacharya
Jennifer Bogut
Lisa Buckley
Lesley Calvert
Christina Carosella
Charlie Cellini
Kathleen Cromie
Paula Fine
Wendy Graeb*
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Russell Graham
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Jocelyn Modesto
Ellen Mondelli
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Frank Neglia
Lauren Nisenson
Nicolas Panzarino
Valerie Ross
Jane Walbridge
Jessica Weisenbach
Tina Whitman**
James Zourzoukis

*Trustee

**Trustee Emerita

THANK YOU

THIS IS “THE PLACE”



“The Connection is a place where our 6-year-old daughter continues to love art, music, crafts, and good old-fashioned fun. The Connection will be part of our daughter’s childhood, where she will learn valuable life skills in a fun and caring environment.”
-Joe, Dance and Camp Parent



“This is the place where I learned that giving time working with loving, generous people in my community gave me back so much more.”
- Marianne, Trustee Emerita



“The Connection really has been a godsend during the pandemic! My husband is retired and loving it now that he has time to hit the “gym” regularly. I take the water exercise class & swim laps and it has been keeping me sane! I also love being greeted at the door by Assata who always says, “Hello Mary!”
Thank you Connection!”
-Mary, Total Facility Member

We are grateful to all our members, staff, and volunteers who helped to keep The Connection moving forward, and to our Board of Trustees for their leadership, commitment, and service.

2021 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Julie Lanzone, Chairwoman | Betsy Phillips, Vice Chairwoman | Erika Melchiorre, Secretary
Beth McCarter, Treasurer | Wendy Graeb, Executive Director | Ann Berkery | Winnie Cavazini
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