

Strengthening Philanthropy in Newark

Report to the Field 2015: Office of the Newark Philanthropic Liaison



Photo: courtesy of Rutgers University-Newark, copyright Theo Anderson

The Office of the Newark Philanthropic Liaison is an innovative collaboration between the Council of New Jersey Grantmakers (CNJG) and the City of Newark. Its core objectives are to convene, connect and leverage the thought leadership and resources of the grantmaking community to better serve the city through partnership with the Office of the Mayor.

A leadership initiative of the Council of New Jersey Grantmakers (CNJG), the statewide network for New Jersey's philanthropic community, the Office of the Newark Philanthropic Liaison (ONPL) is non-partisan and based in Newark's City Hall. Reflecting the dual priorities of the Mayor and the grantmaking community, the Office was established in 2007 under former Mayor, now United States Senator, Cory Booker as one of the nation's first formal partnerships between a city and the philanthropic sector. With the election of Mayor Ras Baraka in 2014, the ONPL continued to be a nationally acclaimed model for public-private alliances. Since its inception, the Office has been led by Jeremy Johnson, serving as the Council's liaison and working side by side with the Mayor's leadership team.

This report provides a brief summary of some of the substantial activities and impact the Office of the Newark Philanthropic Liaison facilitated throughout 2015. The strategy of collective impact is thriving throughout Newark thanks in large part to the work of the Liaison, and the funding community's support of and robust engagement with the Office of the Mayor and anchor institutions across the city continue to reap positive outcomes.

A YEAR OF IMPACT AND ACTION



Jeremy Johnson
Newark Philanthropic Liaison

2015 was a remarkable year for the Liaison Office, building on the change and vision of Mayor Baraka, who was elected in the prior year, and the increasing collaborative work of the Newark funding community. Within the Baraka Administration, Johnson worked in tandem with the Mayor's Chief Policy Advisor Tai Cooper. As a team, their work centered a great deal on the Mayor's top five priorities or *Five Pillars*, which included: Public Safety/Newark Community Street Teams, Summer Youth Employment, My Brother's Keeper Newark, Office of Comprehensive Community Education/Read and Believe, and Centers of Hope.

As the primary organizer of the funding community, Johnson also worked closely with the co-chairs of the Council's four funder affinity groups active in the city – Newark Funders Affinity Group, Newark Funders Subcommittee on Education, Newark Early Learning Funders Group and the Newark City of Learning Collaborative. Johnson built on the activities related to the *Five Pillars* and the affinity groups, and

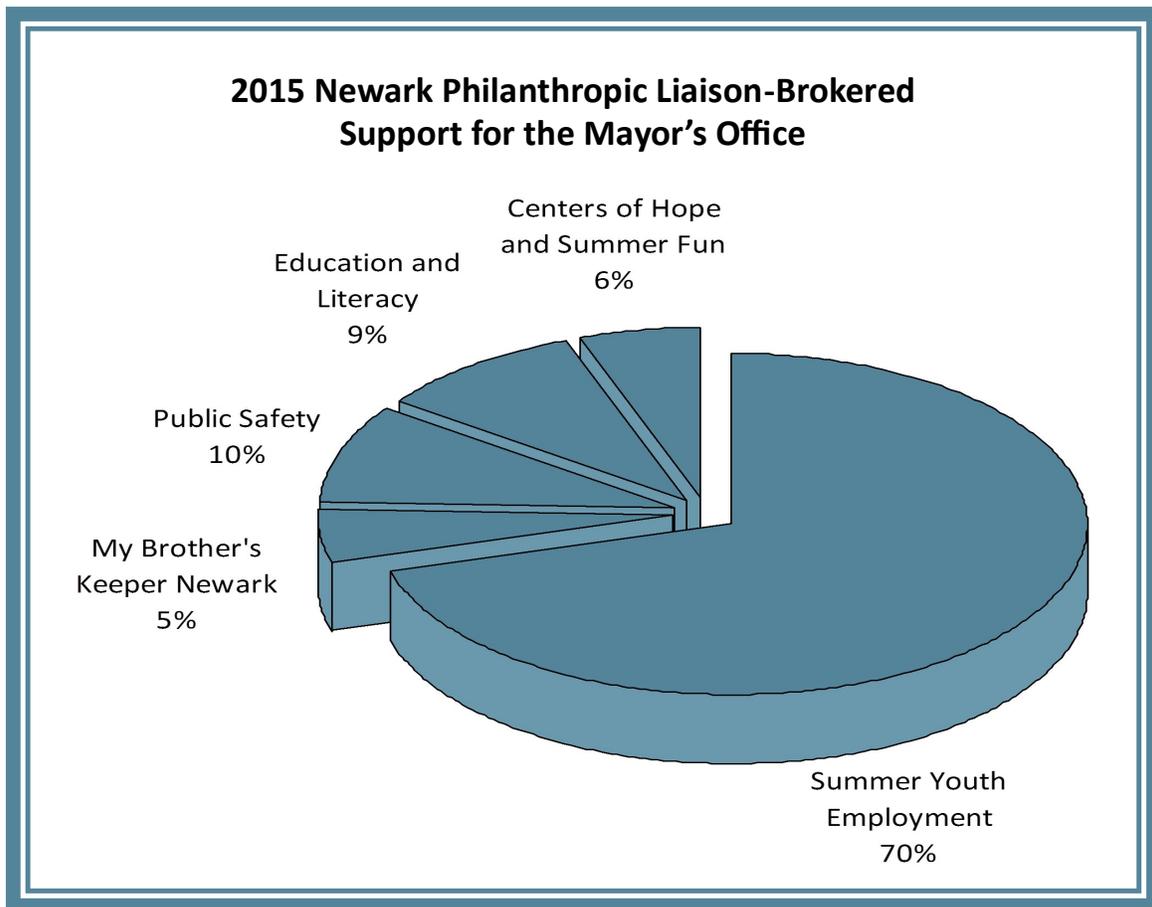
was actively involved with a number of other collaborative community initiatives that intersected with the philanthropic community and the city.

The diagram below is a graphic representation of the relationship between the initiatives identified by Mayor Baraka and the existing collective impact spheres in Newark. In addition to supporting both the priority programs and the collective impact movements, the Liaison works to foster deeper connections between the initiatives to advance policy and systemic change.



THE MAYOR'S PILLARS

Among the myriad issues impacting Newark, Mayor Baraka cited five priority areas. In 2015, the Office of the Newark Philanthropic Liaison brokered over \$3.82 million in support for these programs.



Summer Youth Employment: 2015 saw a dramatic increase in the number of teenagers employed in Newark's Summer Youth Employment Program. The ONPL coordinated substantial fundraising efforts to heed the Mayor's call for an expansion of the program from years past. By the start of the summer, Newark's funding community contributed over \$1.9 million as well additional in-kind support for the effort. The infusion of funds enabled over 2,600 youth to participate in the program, up from 1,500 participants in the previous year. The six-week program offered youth internships in corporations, nonprofits, educational institutions and government offices. One thousand of the teens were enrolled in jobs that provided not only a paycheck but also learning opportunities for coding and urban landscaping, and participation in the Newark City of Learning Collaborative Summer Learning Institute on the campus of Essex County College. Financial empowerment and banking support for these first time workers, made possible by the Cities for Financial Empowerment Fund, was an added bonus.

Public Safety/Newark Community Street Teams: In October 2014, through the work of the ONPL, grantmakers funded the *Newark Public Safety Retreat*, which convened city department heads, public safety officials and public and private leaders to address public safety as a public health issue. The two-day retreat led to the creation of the Safer Newark Council, which was launched in May of 2015 and is committed to cross-sector solutions to reduce violent crime by 20% by 2020.

In 2015, grantmakers came forward again to support a second retreat where Newark's focus on public safety as a public health issue was shared with the broader public. Held on September 9, 2015, *Summit II – Redefining Public Safety*, convened a large cohort of multiple public safety partners working in the city and launched a national public safety campaign that invests in healing individuals and communities as the center of violence reduction strategies.



Summit II – Redefining Public Safety was held at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center on September 9, 2015.

This gathering featured legendary NFL great Jim Brown along with Newark’s Public Safety Advisor Aqeela Sherrills and a number leading practitioners and proponents speaking on best practices and potential innovations in the areas of gang violence; black on black violence; trauma-informed care; criminal justice reform; public safety and community partnerships; and public health and healing.

These retreats also led to grantmaker investments in neighborhood-based Newark Community Street Teams, which target public safety issues in the South Ward. Each team is composed of 15 outreach workers assisting approximately 100 at-risk individuals to

stabilize their lives and turn away from a life of crime through mentoring, life skills and case management. Trained community citizens also help quell violence and provide “safe passage” for children to and from school.

My Brother’s Keeper Newark: 2015 also saw the launch of Newark’s participation in the White House-led campaign *My Brother’s Keeper*, which empowers boys and men of color while strengthening the systems that ensure their success. The city’s philanthropic community provided seed funding for initial roundtables, forums and start-up initiatives and, on February 12, 2015, Newark’s participation in the program gained national exposure at the White House’s *My Brother’s Keeper Community Challenge National Convening*. During the event, which brought together representatives from local communities across the country and experts from the private and public-sectors to discuss expanding opportunity for young people of color, United States Attorney General Eric Holder lauded Newark Central High School teen Taj Atkinson for his leadership.

Office of Comprehensive Community Education/Read and Believe: To help mitigate the impacts of poverty on students and improve the educational environment, the Newark Philanthropic Liaison convened conversations around the campaign to create “community schools” and, following dynamic discussions among neighborhood residents, funders, and education leaders, helped to steward support from the funding community. In addition, the ONPL supported efforts to increase literacy by convening grantmakers to learn more about *Read and Believe*. This effort imagines a city that takes on literacy as a communal cause and includes, among several programs, *My Very Own Library*. Through the work of the Liaison Office and others, grantmakers, individual donors and Rutgers University enabled *My Very Own Library* to serve 27,000 Newark Public School students in grades K-8.

Centers of Hope: The Centers of Hope are community-based centers in all five of Newark’s wards that allow access to city services, wellness and enrichment opportunities where people live and work. Nine centers have opened thus far, some focusing on young women, special needs, entrepreneurship, and municipal ID access. All offer free WiFi and a variety of after school, athletic, arts and culture, educational, environmental, healthy living, and recreation programming to engage children and families.

ONGOING FUNDER LEARNING, NETWORKS & CONNECTIONS

With the establishment of the Council’s Liaison Office, Newark’s funding community determined that it wanted to convene regularly, like CNJG’s many other affinity groups. Accordingly, part of the Liaison’s role has been to coordinate this programming. Today, the Office of the Newark Philanthropic Liaison oversees an active schedule of affinity group convenings and subcommittee work to address Newark’s critical issues.

In 2015, the **Newark Funders Affinity Group**, co-chaired by Etta Denk (Bank of America) and Barbara Reisman (Schumann Fund for New Jersey), provided forums to help Newark funders more effectively share information and

identify, secure, and deploy intellectual and financial capital. In March, the group convened for a discussion of the *Read and Believe* initiative with Dr. Lauren Wells, Chief Education Officer for the City of Newark. Shortly thereafter, they came together again for a special presentation with Nancy Cantor, Chancellor of Rutgers University-Newark. As head of one of Newark's largest anchor institutions, the Chancellor spoke about initiatives and investments that are driving the city's resurgence. Other Affinity Group meetings featured conversations about the city's economic growth, and presented panelists discussing Newark's changing infrastructure—both the built and digital landscapes—and how Newark is planning for the future.

In addition to the work of the Newark Funders Affinity Group, the *Newark Funders Subcommittee on Education*, co-chaired by Dale Anglin (Victoria Foundation) and Sarah Keh (Prudential Foundation) provided a vibrant roster of programs for grantmakers to connect on topics specifically related to Newark's educational environment. The Subcommittee began the year with an in-depth exploration of the critical issues surrounding the new PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career) evaluation, including the implementation, readiness and use of PARCC at the district, state and higher education level. In April, the Subcommittee convened for a discussion on the Funders' Collaborative for High-Quality School Programs, a unique collaboration of local and regional funders who are committed to ensuring that all Newark students have access to high-quality school options that will put them on a path to college readiness. To address rising tensions in the Newark public school system, the Education Subcommittee hosted a two-part open conversation to identify and highlight successful initiatives for education reform in Newark, followed by a funder discussion with Christopher Cerf, the newly appointed Superintendent for Newark Public Schools. Cerf shared his priorities for the upcoming school year and how funders could continue to collaborate with the district.

The *Newark Early Learning Funders Group* hosted a number of engaging programs throughout the year. The March convening featured Gabrielle Miller, national executive director of *Raising A Reader*. Miller spoke about the organization's mission to engage caregivers in a routine of book sharing with their children to foster healthy brain development, healthy relationships, a love of reading, and the literacy skills critical for school success. The Group also hosted a discussion on *Reach Out and Read*, a nonprofit organization that trains and supports medical providers who give books to children and advice to parents about the importance of reading aloud at well-child exams. Other convenings included updates on New Jersey's Pre-K Our Way Campaign, the Foundation for Newark's Future's plans for their final year, and Newark's plans for early care and education. In addition, the Group collectively committed over \$1.5 million to high-quality early childhood education efforts in the state.

SUPPORTING HIGH-QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The Newark Early Learning Funders Group, an affinity group of the Council of New Jersey Grantmakers, committed, through their respective and collective efforts, to putting over \$1.5 million toward high-quality early childhood education for the children of Newark and of the state of New Jersey. The Group will also advocate for and support children aged zero to three by improving parents' access to information; providing early childhood teachers with opportunities for professional growth; and improving early learning centers by investing in center directors.

The Group was acknowledged as part of the White House's *Invest in Us* initiative, which challenges private and public partners to “build a better nation by expanding high-quality early childhood education programs for children birth to five.”

Other notable events convened for Newark grantmakers included a briefing on improving financial literacy for high school students, hosted by the Nicholson Foundation in conjunction with the DoughMain Education Foundation and a tour of Newark's urban agriculture. Grantmakers were also invited to participate in Philanthropy New York's *Education Reform in Newark: Lessons in Philanthropy*, which featured local funders and education practitioners.

NEWARK URBAN AGRICULTURE TOUR

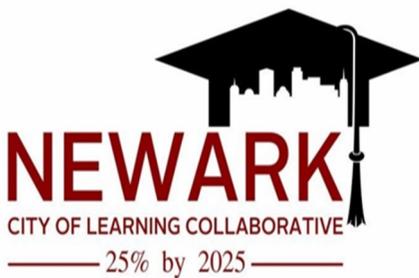
The national Community Food Funders network joined with CNJG to present an Urban Agriculture Tour, introducing grantmakers to the gardens and farms of the Greater Newark Conservancy and Ironbound Community Corporation (ICC).

The Conservancy promotes environmental stewardship to improve the quality of life in New Jersey's urban communities. They achieve their mission through environmental education, community greening and urban agriculture, environmental justice and job training. While visiting the Conservancy, guests learned from participating youth how they grow, harvest and sell affordable produce to neighborhood residents, and spoke with young adults participating in the Conservancy's re-entry workforce training program.

ICC's mission is to engage and empower individuals, families and groups in realizing their aspirations and, together, work to create a just, vibrant and sustainable community. While at Ironbound, guests learned about the new AeroFarms vertical gardens under construction and heard from young adults trained by Ironbound and employed at AeroFarms.

The day also featured a conversation with Newark's Director of Health and Wellness about the city's ambitious food initiatives, and a conversation between a local funder and two local master gardeners about gardening in neighborhoods across Newark.

INCREASING ACCESS TO POSTSECONDARY INITIATIVES: NEWARK CITY OF LEARNING COLLABORATIVE



In 2011, the Office of the Newark Philanthropic Liaison organized a Newark Funders Group working team to "Create a College Going Culture." The team partnered with funders and city administrators and researched past models in Newark and successful models across the country. The ONPL's partnerships and the emergence of new higher education leaders and institutional partners led to the creation of the Newark City of Learning Collaborative (NCLC) in 2013. In 2014, the Indianapolis-based Lumina Foundation and the Newark-based Victoria Foundation made important grants to build and strengthen the Collaborative. Led

by a distinguished Advisory Board and dozens of partners, the NCLC made national news later that year when the Newark team was accepted into the Lumina Foundation's second cohort of 35 new U.S. learning communities.

Thanks to local funders, national stakeholders, and the leadership of Newark's educational institutions, the Newark City of Learning Collaborative publicly launched on January 9, 2015 with a vision "to support, build, and strengthen postsecondary initiatives in the City of Newark," and a goal "to increase the percentage of residents with postsecondary degrees, certificates, and quality credentials from the current 17% to 25% by 2025." The day-long event included panel discussions and presentations by Lumina Foundation officials, Mayor Baraka, and others.

Over the past year, the NCLC has become a citywide network of more than 60 institutions, combining the leadership of multiple sectors such as government, philanthropy, education, corporate, neighborhood, and community-based organizations. It also includes representatives from the City of Newark, the Newark Workforce Investment Board, and the Newark Housing Authority, among others. The Joseph C. Cornwall Center for Metropolitan Studies at Rutgers University-Newark serves as NCLC's coordinating hub and facilitates its activities.

"Increasing college going is a critical aspect of community capacity-building in Newark and doing that is up to all of us—the public, private, and nonprofit sectors, as well as community members across our neighborhoods. With this investment in the cross-sector collaborative infrastructure being built by NCLC, the Foundation for Newark's Future is making a powerful statement about the fundamental importance of city-wide partnerships to building and broadening the pathways to degree completion."

—Nancy Cantor
Chancellor, Rutgers University–Newark

In June 2015, the Foundation for Newark's Future awarded a \$1.5 million grant to the Newark City of Learning Collaborative. One-third of the grant was earmarked to help support additional capacity for the backbone organization, and the remaining \$1 million was allocated to higher education and direct service initiatives highlighted within the NCLC Charter Plan. Later in 2015, the NCLC partnered with foundations and corporations to support the expansion and enhancement of the 2015 Summer Youth Employment Program. Working with the Office of the Mayor and the Newark Youth One-Stop Career Center, the NCLC provided the "Leadership Development" component of the Program for 800 students over the course of six weeks during July and August.

The Newark City of Learning Collaborative has achieved great success over the past few years and is now being viewed as a model for other struggling urban areas.



Left to right: Irene Cooper-Basch (Victoria Foundation), Roland Anglin (Cornwall Center), Nancy Cantor (Rutgers University–Newark), Richard A. Levao (Bloomfield College), Robert L. Johnson (Newark Youth Policy Board; New Jersey Medical School), Mayor Ras Baraka (City of Newark), Kimberly Baxter McLain (Foundation for Newark's Future), Gale Gibson (Essex County College), and Alford Ottley (Pillar College).
Photo credit: Shelley Kusnetz

SHARING THE NEWARK MODEL WITH THE FIELD

There continues to be local and national interest in and visibility for the Office of the Newark Philanthropic Liaison. On October 15, 2015, Jeremy Johnson moderated a panel entitled *Setting the Table: How Philanthropies and Higher Education Joined Forces for Collective Impact in Newark* at the 2015 Eastern Region Campus Compact Conference at New Jersey Institute of Technology. In November, *Inside Philanthropy*, a news website for the nonprofit sector, mentioned the Liaison Office in an article entitled *Should Every City Have a "Chief Philanthropy Officer?"*

DETROIT-NEWARK LEARNING EXCHANGE

The Newark Philanthropic Liaison, representatives from the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, Victoria Foundation, The Prudential Foundation, and Strong Healthy Communities Initiative, along with Mayor Baraka and members of his administration joined their counterparts for a 2-day learning exchange in Detroit, Michigan in October 2015. The exchange connected staffers involved in economic development, the arts, education, place-based community efforts, and policy-making. Attendees met with Detroit Mayor Mike



Duggan, visited redeveloped areas and discussed policy and structural similarities relative to Detroit and Newark. While in Detroit, the Newark contingent met with city officials and Bank of America representatives, as well as counterparts from the Kresge Foundation, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and the Skillman Foundation who are working in Detroit on revitalization strategies.

The trip was underwritten by the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, with additional support from the Victoria Foundation, The Prudential Foundation, and Living Cities' Strong Healthy Communities Initiative.

NEWARK LIAISON: THE NEXT GENERATION

Over the years, the infrastructure to support the Liaison has expanded as the scale of the work grew. Providing part-time administrative support for several years has been Ruby Annette Evans. In addition, a graduate student Fellow working part-time – sometimes paid, sometimes not – has augmented the team. The ONPL is now undergoing a transition. After 8 years and a remarkable track record of success and impact, Jeremy Johnson announced that he would step down as the Liaison at the end of the 1st quarter of 2016. The funding community and the Mayor remain committed to maintaining the Liaison Office and the search for his successor is underway.

CNJG THANKS THE FOLLOWING FUNDER ADVISORS & ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Tai Cooper
Chief Policy Advisor, Office of the Mayor
City of Newark

Irene Cooper-Basch
Executive Officer, Victoria Foundation

Chris Daggett
President and CEO, Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation

Etta Denk
Senior Vice President, NJ Market Manager
Bank of America

Curt Fields
President and CEO, Turrell Fund

Shané Harris
Vice President, The Prudential Foundation

Kimberly Baxter McLain
President and CEO, The Foundation for
Newark's Future

Barbara Reisman
Executive Director, Schumann Fund for New Jersey

Nina Stack
President, Council of New Jersey Grantmakers

Charles Venti
Executive Director, The Nicholson Foundation

FUNDER ADVISORS AND BI-WEEKLY BRIEFINGS

The Office of the Newark Philanthropic Liaison is funded by specially-designated grants to the Council of New Jersey Grantmakers. Liaison funders enjoy an added level of engagement as special advisors. They are briefed bi-weekly via teleconference and annotated agendas.

General members of CNJG are invited to participate in the Newark Funders Affinity Group and related subgroups. Members may also communicate via CNJG's Newark Funders listserve.

For further information about CNJG membership, or supporting the Newark Philanthropic Liaison, contact Nina Stack, President, CNJG, at 609.341.2022.

The Office of the Newark Philanthropic Liaison is supported by:

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2015 OFFICE OF THE NEWARK PHILANTHROPIC LIAISON

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COUNCIL OF NEW JERSEY GRANTMAKERS
Harnessing Philanthropy's Potential