

# Strengthening Philanthropy in Newark

## Report to the Field 2013-2014: Newark Philanthropic Liaison

*A Partnership of the Office of Mayor Ras J. Baraka  
and the Council of New Jersey Grantmakers*



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

The office of the Newark Philanthropic Liaison—an innovative collaboration between the city of Newark and the Council of New Jersey Grantmakers—is tasked with harnessing interest, fostering greater effectiveness, and attracting resources toward policy and programmatic areas that affect Newark’s residents.

Funded through the Council of New Jersey Grantmakers (CNJG), the statewide network for New Jersey’s philanthropic community, the office is non-partisan and based in Newark City Hall. Reflecting the dual priorities of the Mayor and the grantmaking community, the office’s core objectives are to convene, connect, and leverage the thought leadership and resources of the grantmaking community to improve the city through partnerships with municipal leadership.

First established in 2007, the Liaison office represents one of the nation’s first formal partnerships between a city and the philanthropic community, and has become a nationally-acclaimed model for public-private alliances.

### NEW MAYOR EMBRACES PARTNERSHIP WITH PHILANTHROPY

The office of the Newark Philanthropic Liaison successfully fostered robust partnerships between grantmakers and the new administration in 2013-2014, during the lead up to, and the election of, the Honorable Ras J. Baraka, sworn in as the city’s 40th mayor on July 1, 2014.



*Newark Mayor Ras J. Baraka*

*“The funding community ‘leaned in’ during the 2013-2014 transitional period. They demonstrated uninterrupted support for the Liaison office while cultivating thoughtful dialogues with the incoming administration.”*

*—Nina Stack (President, Council of New Jersey Grantmakers)*

In preparation for the change

in leadership, the office initiated a series of conversations so that the grantmaking community could begin building connections. This series culminated in December 2013, with the Newark Funders Group—an affinity group of CNJG that functions under the Newark Philanthropic Liaison—gathering at Panasonic’s new North American headquarters for a forum with then South Ward Councilman Ras Baraka, former New Jersey Assistant Attorney General Shavar Jeffries, North Ward Councilman Anibal Ramos, and Central Ward Councilman Darrin Sharif.

Upon winning the mayoralty of New Jersey’s largest city, Mayor Baraka pledged to work with the office of the Newark Philanthropic Liaison, further validating the philanthropic community’s seven-year engagement with City Hall and the power of public-private partnerships. Moreover, in the weeks leading up to the



*The Newark Funders Group held a forum with four of Newark's mayoral candidates at Panasonic's North American headquarters in Newark, New Jersey. Photo credit: Dan Unger, Panasonic.*

inauguration, grantmakers convened several times to craft strategies to engage and support the administration. Drawing inspiration from the retreats held in New York City prior to Mayor Bill DiBlasio's election, Newark grantmakers supported Mayor-Elect Baraka by offering to underwrite cross-sector convenings that addressed the Mayor's priorities. The resulting meetings, which included philanthropic leaders, as well as government, nonprofit, education and business stakeholders, culminated in the creation of the *Newark Mayoral Transition Briefing*. Mayor Baraka embraced the recommendations set forth in this document, and included the publication as an appendix to his official transition report: *Blueprint for a New Newark*.

Grantmakers did not delay in making good on the recommendations, which included underwriting a

municipal leadership retreat, working in concert with the leadership of Mayor-Elect Baraka's Transition Team, continuing support for the Liaison office, and establishing a communications process that works effectively with the administration. To this end, more than a dozen funders served on various committees working with the Mayor's Transition Team and grantmakers committed to continue support for the office, which saw uninterrupted funding in 2013-2014. In October 2014, the first municipal leadership retreat was held, focusing on public safety. It included leadership from the Mayor and participation from funders, faith-based leaders, public safety officials and others. And, to bolster communications, the Mayor appointed Chief Policy Advisor Tai Cooper as the point person to the Liaison office, coordinating communications and prioritizing philanthropic areas of interest.

The inclusion of the recommendations in the transition report—and grantmakers' resulting implementation—underscored the strong determination on both sides to further engage philanthropy in the movement to build a brighter future for Newark.

## SHARING IDEAS AND ALIGNING RESOURCES IN SUPPORT OF EDUCATION

The uniqueness of grantmakers is evident among the diverse funders who comprise the Newark Funders Group. Despite varying missions and objectives, Newark funders have found common causes to support. In some cases, they pooled funds to be distributed according to certain guidelines and objectives. In other cases, funders have agreed to a shared investment strategy which provides autonomy, yet encourages philanthropy in a specific direction. The Newark Philanthropic Liaison office has nurtured these ideas and the alignment of resources.

### [Early Learning Funders Shared Investment Strategy](#)

One year after a "Kids Count" report by Advocates for Children of New Jersey (ACNJ) exposed that half of the children in Newark ages five and under live in poverty, in April 2014 the Newark Early Learning Funders Group—a subset of the Newark Funders Group—announced a \$1 million shared investment strategy to support enhanced delivery of quality early education to Newark's youngest residents, ages zero to three years old.



*The office of the Newark Philanthropic Liaison bolsters Early Learning Funders' efforts to increase high quality early childhood education. Photo Credit: Advocates for Children of New Jersey.*

## Newark City of Learning Collaborative Evolves from Liaison Office and Funder Initiatives

In 2011, the Liaison office 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 Liaison office’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.

NCLC seeks to increase the percentage of Newark residents who hold postsecondary credentials. Specifically, the NCLC supports the City of Newark 2012 Master Plan goal of “25% by 2025.” That is, the city aims to increase the number of Newark adults with high quality postsecondary degrees and high quality credentials from 18% to 25% by 2025. The NCLC combines the leadership of multiple sectors such as government, philanthropy, education, corporate, neighborhood, and community-based organizations. During the mayoral transition years of 2013-2014, the Liaison Jeremy Johnson assumed the role of Co-Chair (with Dale Anglin of the Victoria Foundation).

Led by a distinguished Advisory Board and dozens of partners, the NCLC initiative made national news. The Newark team was accepted into the Lumina Foundation’s second cohort of 35 new U.S. learning communities on May 15, 2014.



Guided by ACNJ and recommendations from a parent-led Early Childhood Policy Board, the Early Learning Funders Group met for over 18 months at the Turrell Fund and drew on dozens of discussions, research sessions, and presentations. The shared investment strategy includes \$500,000 in cornerstone funding from the Turrell Fund, combined with a \$250,000 challenge grant from the Foundation for Newark’s Future and supporting commitments from the Schumann Fund for New Jersey and The Nicholson Foundation. The resources will strengthen early Head Start programs and increase parental engagement in their children’s learning.



Senator Cory A. Booker with Newark Early Learning Funders Group

*“Quality early childhood education is critical to the long-term success of young people. I commend the local philanthropic community for meeting the challenge grant. This initiative serves as a true model of collaboration and partnership, and it represents a shared vision for Newark’s youngest citizens.”*

—Senator Cory Booker

### **Newark Education Funders' Collaborative**

The Education Subcommittee of the Newark Funders Group partnered with the Trust for Newark Education, which houses, manages and supports the Funders' Collaborative (formerly known as the NPS Innovative Schools Investment Fund). The Collaborative is based on the principle that funding should focus on improving teaching and learning in order to increase student achievement.

In its first year, the Funders' Collaborative raised \$1.3 million and brought together ten diverse local and national funders, with differing priority areas, to increase the quality and number of high quality public

school options, by funding 14 schools through seven non-profit partners, impacting 4,000 students and their families. In years two and three, the Collaborative further expanded on these goals while securing more than \$2 million in private funding. In 2014, the Collaborative's resources helped to ensure a smooth transition for a dozen targeted schools, with awards ranging from \$15,000 to \$25,000 for family/community engagement, planning support, financial support and wellness, and academic enrichment/access programs.

## CONVENINGS AND COLLABORATIONS

Private initiatives have great potential to be more effective and far-reaching when they are jointly executed. The office of the Newark Philanthropic Liaison serves as a catalyst to connect funders across silos for collective impact and long-term benefits. During 2013-2014, existing collaboratives, such as the Greater Newark Funders Workforce Collaborative and the Newark Arts Education Roundtable, were joined by new collective efforts. Funders are participating in cross-sector convenings with city officials, and formulating joint efforts that reduce violence, make for safer neighborhoods, and create welcoming corridors throughout the city.



*A cross-sector retreat on public safety was organized by the Liaison office with the Mayor's Office, Rutgers University-Newark, and regional grantmakers. A "Safer Newark Council" is poised to emerge from the convening.*

### Newark Public Safety

A Newark Public Safety Retreat held in October 2014 marked an important step in Mayor Baraka's campaign to make public safety a priority and to develop new solutions to make Newark safer. The retreat was a combined effort of the Mayor's Office and the Liaison office, with financial and organizing support from the Victoria Foundation, Community Foundation of New Jersey, PSEG, Prudential, MCJ Amelior Foundation, Greater Newark LISC, Schumann Fund for New Jersey, Rutgers University, and many other partners. An outgrowth of the retreat was the call for creation of a "Safer Newark Council." The Council may include leadership from corporations, foundations, and anchor institutions that could pool funds and deliver public safety strategy guidance and expertise, identifying needs and gaps in order to drive better coordination of public safety initiatives in Newark.

### Healthy Homes

The Michigan-based Kresge Foundation has invested more than \$1.75 million in "getting the lead out" and "healthy homes" initiatives in Newark. During a recent site visit, Kresge officials met with Newark Mayor Ras Baraka, Newark Philanthropic Liaison Jeremy Johnson, Newark Health Director Dr. Hanaa Hamdi and area funders. Kresge emphasized its willingness to heighten its work with local grantmakers to strengthen the city's capacity to foster safer, healthier living conditions for children and families. The initiative is expected to attract funders with diverse interests that range from seniors and aging to asthma-reduction initiatives.

*"The Newark Philanthropic Liaison office has been an important link between Kresge Foundation's Advancing Safe and Healthy Homes Initiative (ASHHI) and the City of Newark. We hope to build on the Liaison's connection to area grantmakers as we increase efforts to address home hazards such as asthma-triggering allergens, fire hazards, substandard insulation and weatherization, repair issues, and neighborhood nuisances like abandoned buildings that invite crime."*

*—David Fukuzawa, Managing Director,  
Kresge Foundation Health Program*

### Newark South Ward

The South Ward is one of the city's largest, historically rich, and yet most economically distressed areas. In October 2014, the Newark Funders Group devoted its quarterly meeting to a panel discussion on the complex issues facing the Ward—public safety, housing, education, health, and more. The goal of this convening was to foster better alignment of strategies and resources for South Ward residents. Unlike the city's other wards, the South lacks an overarching community development organization to help guide its growth. Working together, funders, government officials and nonprofit leaders are considering the possibility of an umbrella entity and combined resources to strengthen the Ward.



*The Newark Funders Group met at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center on October 8, 2014 for a discussion of South Ward Initiatives. The meeting included representatives from the office of Mayor Ras Baraka and South Ward stakeholders.  
Photo Credit: Peter C. Richter, Newark Beth Israel Medical Center.*

## LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP: INCOMING NATIONAL FUNDERS CONNECT WITH LOCAL GRANTMAKERS

The office of the Newark Philanthropic Liaison supports national funders as they consider local investment opportunities. The office helps grantmakers seeking to put their finger on the pulse of Newark's political, philanthropic, and nonprofit environment. During 2013-2014, for example, two very different national funders made their mark on the local landscape.

The **Garfield Foundation**, a Boston-based family foundation, is nimbly cultivating community revitalization across Newark. The office helped introduce the Foundation and strengthen it's connection to on-the-ground projects, including: Ironbound Community Corporation's Ballantine Revitalization Project; the Greater Newark Workforce Funders Collaborative; Rutgers Business School's Center for Supply Chain Management; and Forward Ever Sustainable Business Alliance.

On the other end of the spectrum is the Indianapolis-based **Lumina Foundation**, one of the country's top 100 foundations. Lumina named Newark as part of "Cohort Two," a group of 35 cities to be targeted with technical and financial support to increase postsecondary education. The Liaison office, working with local funders and officials from the Mayor's Office, first connected with Lumina in 2011. A series of follow up discussions and meetings, as well as leadership from incoming Chancellor Nancy Cantor at Rutgers University-Newark ultimately led to Lumina's award of financial and technical support.

*"Newark welcomes Lumina Foundation's financial and technical support. According to the U.S. Census, less than 13% of Newark residents have an advanced degree. This is a serious problem. Newark's vitality and future depends on an educated workforce. My administration looks forward to partnering with Lumina and the Newark City of Learning Collaborative to develop a broad-based comprehensive approach to adult learning that creates partnerships between businesses, colleges and universities, organized labor and city agencies to provide residents with a variety of 21st century employment skills and talents."*

*—Newark Mayor Ras Baraka*

## CONVENTIONAL WISDOM: NATIONAL MEETINGS SERVE TO STRENGTHEN NEWARK



*The Newark contingent at  
"Gathering of Leaders 2014: Building a Movement for Impact"  
in Oakland, California.*

In 2014, the office of the Philanthropic Liaison increased its interaction with national funders and thought leaders around issues of immediate concern to Newark. The office participated in several conventions at which best practices were shared. CNJG thanks the Victoria Foundation, Living Cities, and the Kresge Foundation for supporting the Liaison's ability to attend these gatherings.

### RECENT CONVENINGS

- ◆ *A Gathering of Leaders 2014: Building a Movement for Impact*, June 16-18, 2014, Oakland, CA. The Newark Philanthropic Liaison and fellow stakeholders attended this special conference for grantmakers and thought leaders on improving outcomes for men and boys of color. Special thanks to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's New Jersey Health Initiative and the Victoria Foundation for making the Liaison's participation possible.
- ◆ *Advancing Safe and Healthy Homes for Children and Families Initiative (ASHHI) Meeting*, April 26-27, 2014, St. Pete Beach, FL. This convening, under the auspices of The Kresge Foundation, brought together six target communities and national thought leaders and policy makers to improve health in the home environment.
- ◆ *National Healthy Homes Conference: Housing, Health, and Education: Where Missions Meet*, May 29, 2014, Nashville, TN. Highlights of the summit were a colloquy by HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan and Rip Rapson, President and CEO of The Kresge Foundation, on the opportunities to strengthen America's cities and neighborhoods.
- ◆ *Living Cities Learning Community Conference*, March 11-13, 2014, Oakland, CA. This learning community focused on building partnerships through collective impact to create greater opportunity for low-income populations. The conference featured USC Professor Manuel Pastor and included discussions about engaging corporate partners and creating effective private anchor strategies.

## SHARING THE NEWARK MODEL WITH THE FIELD

Word of the Newark Philanthropic Liaison office is spreading. Two insightful blog posts on the office—*The Quiet Side of Philanthropy in Newark* and *Philanthropy Grows in Newark as Economic Investment Expands*—have been featured on the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation website. In addition, the office was highlighted in a white paper by the University of Southern California's Center on Philanthropy and Public Policy: *Philanthropy and Government Working Together: The Role of Offices of Strategic Partnerships in Public Problem Solving*. Liaison Jeremy Johnson and CNJG President Nina Stack have also given counsel to various cities, government entities and other national colleagues about the structure and operations of the office. Highlights of these national sharing events include:

### *Memphis, TN*

At the invitation of Dr. Douglas Scarborough, Chief Learning Officer for the City of Memphis, the Liaison met with Memphis Mayor A.C. Wharton for a *Philanthropic Engagement Peer Exchange*, sponsored by the German Marshall Fund. The Liaison advised the Mayor's Office, city leaders and representatives of the Memphis Grantmakers Forum about the structure and parameters of the Newark Liaison office.

Washington, DC

The CNJG President spoke about the Newark Philanthropic Liaison at *Catalyzing Collaboration: The Developing Infrastructure for Public Private Partnerships at the Federal Level*. Co-hosted by The Center on Philanthropy and Public Policy at the University of Southern California and the Council on Foundations, this dialogue was part of a series of convenings around research findings and policy issues to help key decision makers work together more effectively to solve community problems and to identify strategies for action.

## SPHERES OF INFLUENCE AND CONNECTIVITY LINKED BY NEWARK PHILANTHROPIC LIAISON



## 2012-2014 Executive Highlights

*Early Learning Funders Group announced \$1M shared investment strategy, supporting high quality early education and increased parental engagement*

*Newly elected Mayor Ras Baraka included Newark Funders Group's recommendations in Transition Report*

*Michigan-based Kresge Foundation recommitted to a multi-sector Healthy Homes initiative, led by Mayor's Office, office of the Newark Philanthropic Liaison and Strong Healthy Communities Initiative*

*Grantmakers supported and attended Mayor's first cross-sector retreat, focused on public safety*

*Local funders and Rutgers University-Newark attracted Indianapolis-based Lumina Foundation and others to launch the Newark City of Learning Collaborative*

*Newark Funders learned important lessons on organizational partnerships at a groundbreaking convening on "Three Non Profits"*

*The U.S. Conference of Mayors adopted a resolution to endorse offices that facilitate close collaboration between local governments, foundations, and nonprofits. The Newark Philanthropic Liaison office is cited as an initiative that facilitates dialogue, develops shared agendas, and coordinates the implementation of partnership efforts involving government and philanthropy.*

### 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

*Ellen Lambert*

President, PSEG Foundation

*Kimberly Baxter McLain*

President and CEO, The Foundation for Newark's Future

*Barbara Reisman*

Executive Director, Schumann Fund for New Jersey

*Suzanne Spero*

Executive Director, The MCJ Amelior Foundation

*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.

### Philanthropic Liaison Team



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# CNJG

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