

*the*Steward

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Kindness, Compassion, and Giving Freely—A Wang Family Tradition

In the 1930s, Jo Wang Loi's father, Chinese diplomat GH Wang, arrived in the United States with the goal of improving cultural understanding between the United States and China. GH and his American-born wife, Gladys Chen Foin, worked for six decades toward their goal, raised four children in communities in Chicago and New Orleans, and displayed seemingly limitless generosity and compassion toward their friends and neighbors.

As a diplomat, GH refused gifts and recognition—once turning down an acre of land, a common perk for diplomats who wanted to fish the New Orleans bayous—because he said it would be “an outward show of wealth.”



Gladys and GH Wang established the G&G Educational Foundation and are the namesakes of the G&G Educational Foundation funds now administered by the Northwest Connecticut Community Foundation.

While living in Chicago, GH noticed many of the elderly struggling, living in cold damp basements or garages.

He recruited friends and colleagues to form a neighborhood redevelopment association that built low- and moderate-income housing in the Chinatown area. One of the projects was senior housing for the elderly—the construction of warm and welcoming one-bedroom apartments within walking distance of stores, restaurants, and churches.

To ensure continuity in their life's work, GH and Gladys established The G&G Educational Foundation, an endowed charitable foundation to promote understanding of Chinese culture. For many years, they managed the Foundation themselves, researching programs and organizations, and awarding grants in support of unique and inspiring arts, scientific, and cultural programs.

The Wangs' philanthropic spirit and love of community stemmed from their family tradition. GH and Gladys lived—as the Wang family members still do—by a family code of ethics. This code is noted in the Wang family book of records, which tracks, among many things, births, marriages, accomplishments, and deaths

dating from 571 BC. Based on the teachings of Confucius, the Wang family code states that the Wangs display kindness to their family members and others, contribute freely to charities to help the distressed and relieve the poor, judge others fairly, and practice courtesy and modesty.

“My father was amazing,” said Jo Wang Loi. “He would walk down the street in Chicago's Chinatown, and people would grab his hands and thank him [for the senior housing]. He set the example for all of us. He devoted his life to service and to giving to others.”

In 1999, GH passed away. The G&G Educational Foundation was left to his and Gladys' children: Edward, James, Jo, and Nancy, with Jo serving as secretary-treasurer. Jo managed the Foundation from her home in Lakeville, Connecticut, determined to continue her parents' legacy. Jo and her brothers and sister worked diligently to research nonprofit programs and award grants, while maintaining the Foundation's endowment.

“We wanted to continue what dad had set up with my mom—to further promote understanding between the West and China,” said Jo.

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Washington Environmental Council, Khurshed Bhumgara Fund Mind the Recycling Gap

The Washington Environmental Council in Washington, Connecticut, is always seeking new and creative ways to reduce waste for the health and welfare of all living creatures. WEC provides lectures on environmental topics, and holds events annually, such as its Earth Day Roadside Clean-up and 5K. WEC also awards scholarships to Washington students entering environmental studies.

Early in 2018, through a grant from the **Khurshed Bhumgara Fund**, WEC launched Zero Waste Washington. Through the initiative, TerraCycle Zero Waste boxes allow residents to recycle items that are not permitted in the single stream recycling. Boxes throughout Washington collect items, including toothbrushes, art supplies, hair-product tubes, make-up containers, shaving-foam tubes, backpacks, shoes, alkaline batteries, and garden products.

“Many of these items are almost guaranteed to end up in the regular trash stream,” said Diane Lash Decker, WEC Co-President.

“Each time an individual learns that there is the possibility of recycling a certain item (such as a tape dispenser, a CD, or a candy wrapper), it affects the way they look at that item for the rest of their life.”



ASAP! Business Manager Annie Musso places a zero-waste art recycling box in the ASAP! Office in Washington Depot.

Steven Garbin Honors his Parents, Gives Back to his Hometown

Steven L. Garbin grew up in Torrington the only child of Mario and Helen (Balogh) Garbin. He translated a love of cars and driving into a business, owning Triumph Taxi in Boston for more than 20 years. But when he was ready to retire, he came home to the south end of Torrington.

The Helen and Mario Garbin Scholarship Fund awards scholarships annually to local students beginning their first year of college and continuing their education.

Steven owned several antique vehicles, and frequented antique shops and flea markets looking for unique items. He played cards with longtime friends and visited with his mother at her final resting place in St. Francis Cemetery. When he felt he couldn't take care of himself any longer, he moved into Wolcott Hall Retirement Center, still frequenting Scarpelli's, one of his favorite restaurants.

Steven passed away in early 2017 at the age of 84. Through estate planning, he left an enduring gift and a legacy of compassion and kindness. Steven established an endowed fund named in honor of his parents. The **Helen and Mario Garbin Scholarship Fund** provides scholarships to local students, and will continue to do so, forever.

“Steve was a kind and generous person,” said Egidio Recidivi, a longtime friend. “Steve's generous gift is a testament to his love of Torrington.”



Donors Feed the Hungry, Make Holidays Bright

In Litchfield County, 10 percent of residents experience food insecurity from time to time, meaning they don't know where their next meal is coming from. Most are working, but struggling with low wages and balancing other basic-need expenses, such as utilities, healthcare, and housing.

Northwest Connecticut nonprofits are working to fill the gaps for those struggling financially by providing warm meals and pantry staples.

The Friendly Hands Food Bank serves 1,600 adults, children and elderly members of our communities with food bi-weekly, and provides Thanksgiving, Easter, and Christmas meals and holiday gifts annually. The Food Bank is one of more than 20 food pantries, soup kitchens, and nutritional programs in the Northwest Corner working to ease the pain of hunger for vulnerable members of our communities.

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Connecticut Food Bank Mobile Food Pantry provides healthful meals to more than 500 individuals, many of them children, each December.

2018 Grants in Support of Food Security

Khurshed Bhumgara Fund

Friendly Hands Food Bank in support of stocking the food pantry for the winter months

Food Rescue in support of the launch of Food Rescue US in Northwest Connecticut, a platform for transferring food from grocers, restaurants, and other food industry sources that would otherwise be thrown away and delivering it to organizations assisting those struggling with food insecurity.

Hands of Grace in support of the purchase of a commercial freezer, enabling the nonprofit to provide larger quantities of fresh produce.

Marion Wm. and Alice Edwards Fund

Fishes & Loaves Food Pantry in support of the purchase of two freezers to store food and prevent spoilage.

Draper Foundation Fund

Connecticut Food Bank in support of the Kids' Backpack Program, which provides meals when school is not in session for 112 food insecure children in Torrington and Winsted.

Community Kitchen of Torrington in support of a consultant to create a strategic plan for long-term sustainability.

Echo Valley Foundation Fund

The Corner Food Pantry of Lakeville in support of the organization and its mission.

Critical-Needs Grants Provide Additional Year-end Support



Winchester Center Congregational Church members prepare Meals in a Bag for the Gathering Place and FISH in Torrington, and the YMCA Homeless Shelter and Open Door Soup Kitchen in Winsted.

Through the **Draper Foundation Fund**, the **Marion Wm. and Alice Edwards Fund**, and a donor who wishes to remain anonymous, the Community Foundation awarded \$67,000 in critical-needs grants to nonprofits serving some of the area's most economically distressed residents and providing the most basic of necessities—food, warm clothing, fuel assistance and shelter.

Organizations apply for grants each Fall. Grants are awarded in December.

View a complete list of 2018 critical-needs grant recipients at northwestcf.org/2018criticalneeds

Torrington Library, Lucia Tuttle Fritz Fund Save Historical Treasures

Staff at the Torrington Library recently made a discovery of historic proportions. Tucked among stored items, staff uncovered a collection of historical letters and documents dating from the 1700s through the mid-1800s.

The well-preserved documents include a Revolutionary War discharge letter signed by George Washington, a letter written by James Madison, and correspondence between abolitionist John Brown and his most valued militant (some would say spy), John Cook. The letters were dated 1855, four years before the duo's infamous raid at Harpers Ferry, which historians believe played an important role in provoking the Civil War.

Through a grant from the **Lucia Tuttle Fritz Fund** of the Community Foundation, library staff worked with Liberty Art and Framing of Torrington to preserve and frame the documents so they can be viewed online at torringtonlibrary.org and in-person at the Torrington Library.

"Each document was framed using state-of-the-art glazing for invisible anti-reflective coating enabling visitors to view even the smallest details," said Jessica E. Gueniat, Torrington Library Director.

"They are vital pieces of Torrington and American History, and we are hopeful the public will enjoy them as much as we do."

Historical Documents Recovered and Preserved

Revolutionary War discharge signed by George Washington, circa 1781

Letter written by George Washington, circa 1781

Land deed from Owen Brown, John Brown's father, circa 1800

Letters written by John Brown, circa 1854-55

Letter written by John Burgoyne, circa 1777

Letter written by James Madison, circa 1815

Letter written by Daniel Webster, circa 1857

Land deed transferring property from Mr. Elisha Turner to the Torrington Library, circa 1899

View these documents at torringtonlibrary.org or visit the Torrington Library to view them in-person beginning December 6th.



Among the historical treasures recently discovered and preserved at the Torrington Library is a Revolutionary War discharge letter signed by George Washington.



Bradford Hoar

Be What's Possible...

Year-end gifts make a world of difference. Did you know if you are 70 ½ years old or older you can support the community you love and the causes that matter to you by transferring up to \$100,000 per-year from your IRA to the Community Foundation—without incurring federal income taxes today or estate and income taxes in the future.

Contact Bradford Hoar, VP of Philanthropic Services at bhoar@northwestcf.org or (860) 626-1245 for more information. And, explore the *Guide for Giving* at northwestcf.org/guide for more creative giving options.

What matters to you? Tell us at northwestcf.org/contact

Kindness, Compassion, and Giving Freely—A Wang Family Tradition

Every year, Jo would allocate five percent of the Foundation's fund balance for grants. She and her siblings, with the help of their children, chose the most worthy grant recipients. In December of each year, Jo would write more than 30 grant letters with checks.

As the Foundation grew, so did the work. Jo and her siblings struggled to find a workable succession plan. How could they keep their parents' legacy alive in perpetuity? By 2016, Jo found a solution that not only made the work of The G&G Educational Foundation more manageable, but also secured its future. That solution was the Northwest Connecticut Community Foundation.

The G&G Educational Foundation was transferred into four donor-advised funds with the Community Foundation, each with the same goal as the G&G Educational Foundation, each with a sibling serving as a donor-advisor with two generations of successor advisors.

"Working with the Community Foundation was a very natural way to proceed," said Jo. "Community Foundation staff explained the options very clearly, enabling a smooth transition. I am so indebted to them. It has been nice to be relieved of all the administrative duties. All I have to do now is go to the Community Foundation website, log into DonorCentral, and choose where I want grants awarded.

"I am grateful for the Community Foundation. It has solved the problem of what happens next when this generation passes, knowing there will be two more generations as successor advisors. My parents' vision, the family code, everything my parents wanted to accomplish with the G&G Educational Foundation, will continue long after we have faded away."

Jo Loi Wang and Kiau Loi Continue Tradition of Giving



Jo Wang Loi and Kiau Loi, (Right to left), donor-advisors for The G&G Educational Foundation-Jo Wang and Kiau Loi Family Fund at their home in Lakeville, Connecticut

As one of four funds created from The G&G Educational Foundation, **The G&G Educational Foundation-Jo Wang and Kiau Loi Family Fund** supports initiatives, scholarships and programming that deepen the knowledge and understanding between China and America and address the human-service needs of Asian people and communities in the United States.

Recent grants include support for Running Start, a non-partisan organization that brings young women into politics by inspiring and training them to become political leaders; and Oberlin Shansi, an organization dedicated to building mutual understanding and respect through educational and cultural exchanges; and individual projects with universities and non-governmental organizations in China, India, Indonesia, and Japan.

"Giving was ingrained in me growing up," said Jo. "I truly feel that if we live in a community, we have to be willing to give up some of our individual wants and needs for the benefit of the whole. It's a crucial part of being a citizen of the U.S. and of the world."

Funds Put Education within Reach for Local Students

Nearly two hundred students from the Northwest Corner were awarded scholarships for the 2018-2019 academic year, receiving a total of \$158,500 in scholarships through various Community Foundation funds.

Students are awarded based on parameters set by donors that may include financial need, academic performance, community participation, extra-curricular activities, work experience, and/or essays.

"Thank you so much for awarding me the Khurshed Bhumgara Fund scholarship. The scholarship will allow me to advance my schooling, preparing me for a career in veterinary sciences," said Taylor Marchand.

There are more than 50 scholarship funds with the Community Foundation. Some focus on rewarding students for community involvement, and participation in organized religion or sports. Others support students pursuing careers in education, journalism or Italian studies. Many focus on specific towns or high schools.



(Top to bottom) Oliver Wolcott Technical High School Valedictorian Caitlyn Malenfant, Torrington High School Graduate Tyler Day, and Connecticut River Academy Graduate Taylor Marchand

Recently Established Funds that Support Education

Edward W. Diskavich Scholarship Fund

Mr. Diskavich established this fund through his estate planning to support the educational goals of graduates of Oliver Wolcott Technical High School.

Helen and Mario Garbin Scholarship Fund

Torrington resident Steven Garbin established this fund through his estate planning to honor his parents and support the educational goals of local students.

Health Care Auxiliary Scholarship Fund

This fund supports the educational goals of Region 1 students pursuing a career in healthcare.

TAPSG Marion Muschell Award

Established by the Torrington Area Parkinson's Support Group, this fund enables Torrington High School to award a scholarship to a graduating senior intending to study nursing or related nursing disciplines.

The United Nations of Connecticut Scholarship Fund

This fund supports scholarships to current high school students who will enroll in an accredited two or four year undergraduate institution and who demonstrate academic excellence and clear commitment to engagement in international issues.

Learn more about Scholarship Funds and funds that support education at northwestcf.org/funds

Your Guide to Giving has Arrived

The Community Foundation recently published *Guide to Giving*. The Guide provides answers to questions that arise in conversations with thoughtful, creative givers like you. The Guide explores topics including:

- Is charitable giving important to me?
- Do I want to give many small gifts or fewer large gifts?
- How long do I want the impact of my gifts to last?
- Which types of gifts are best for me: cash, stock, insurance policies, in-kind, etc.?
- Should I consider a bequest in my will?
- Is my legacy something I care about?

Explore the *Guide to Giving* at northwestcf.org/guide



Contribute to your favorite fund online at northwestcf.org

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Donors Feed the Hungry



Friendly Hands Food Bank volunteers prepare for a Thanksgiving feast and stock their shelves for those who need a little help this holiday season.

“Those experiencing a financial crisis are often forced to buy cheap, low-quality food in order to stretch their budget,” said Kiersten Schiffer of Hands of Grace, of St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, who recently assisted a woman whose young daughter was suffering from anemia as a result of eating mainly inexpensive canned and processed foods.

Hands of Grace assists individuals and families referred by social service agencies. The nonprofit provides emergency food to more than 2,000 Northwest Corner residents annually, almost half of whom are children. Hands of Grace also offers Thanksgiving and Christmas meals and holiday gifts.

Nonprofits providing for basic needs, including access to nutritious food, receive support through Community Foundation discretionary grants awarded three times per year, through critical-needs grants awarded in December, and through the generosity of donors and fundholders throughout the year.

For more information, read the Community Foundation report Starved for Attention, Food Insecurity in Northwest Connecticut at northwestcf.org/publications

Foundation Focus

Victor M. Muschell of Torrington and Lori Riiska of Winsted have been named to the Community Foundation Board of Directors.



Victor M. Muschell is an attorney who engages in the general practice of law with an emphasis on labor and employment and municipal law. He is labor counsel for the City of Torrington and has recently been appointed its Interim Corporation Counsel. He is an alternate member of the Connecticut State Board of Mediation and Arbitration and a former president of the Connecticut Bar Foundation, which is the main funding source of legal aid to underserved residents of Connecticut.

An advocate of a revitalized downtown, Victor is co-president of the Torrington Development Corporation, which is responsible for the completion of Torrington’s Municipal Development Plan, providing the outlines of major infrastructure improvements to the downtown area. He currently serves as corporate secretary and board member of the Warner Theatre, and board member of Five Points Center for the Visual Arts, the Torrington-Winsted Area Rotary Club, the United Way, the Torrington Area Parkinson’s Support Group, an Emeritus of the NW Connecticut YMCA, and a Trustee of Center Congregational Church.

Victor is a Corporator of the Torrington Historical Society and the Brooker Memorial. He has received the NW Chamber’s Business Leader Award, Rotary’s Paul Harris award, the YMCA’s Legacy award, the Wisdom House Promoter of Community Progress Award, and the Boy Scouts’ Good Scout Award.



Lori Riiska, CPA, owner, Lori Riiska CPA, LLC is a life-long resident of Connecticut and a graduate of the University of Connecticut. She is a member of the UConn Foundation Board of Directors and serves on the alumni, audit, human resources, development, and search committees. She is a founding member of Women in Philanthropy and was keynote speaker at the 2013 December graduation reception.

Lori is Chair of the Connecticut Society of CPAs Peer Review Committee, a trustee of both the Northwest Connecticut YMCA and the Draper Foundation Fund, a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, and the Litchfield County Business Professionals, and is a director of Northwest Community Bank.

Leadership Forum Promotes Nonprofit Excellence, Brings Leaders Together

More than 150 Board Leaders and Executive Directors from nonprofits throughout Northwest Connecticut, as well as Massachusetts, and New York, gathered for Board Leadership Forum, a daylong training and networking event.

Northwest Connecticut Community Foundation collaborated with Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation and the Foundation for Community Health to provide the forum, which featured nine workshops by experts in governance, fundraising, and change management. Keynote speaker Rodney Christopher of Fiscal Management Associates, a consultancy that serves nonprofits and foundations nationwide, kicked off the event speaking about nonprofit resilience.

View photos of the event at northwestcf.org/BLF



Board Leadership Forum presenter Marci Sternheim addresses attendees during breakout session Culture (B)eats Strategy ... Every Time

Also Online...

The Women & Girls Fund Welcomes New Committee Member

Jane Williams of Winsted, Connecticut has been named to the executive committee of the Women & Girls Fund. Jane is the coordinator for the Center for Workforce Development at Northwestern Connecticut Community College.

[Read more at northwestcf.org/womenandgirls](http://northwestcf.org/womenandgirls)

Local Nonprofits Awarded \$190,475

Spring and Summer Grants support access to healthful food, a clean local environment, the arts—music and theatre and much more...

[Learn more at northwestcf.org/springsummer](http://northwestcf.org/springsummer)

Draper Foundation Fund Awards More than \$800,000 in Fall Grants

The Draper Foundation Fund of the Community Foundation supported addiction recovery and mental health, homelessness recovery and much more...

[Learn more at northwestcf.org/draper](http://northwestcf.org/draper)

Congratulations LEAP 2018 Graduates

Ten professionals from Northwest Connecticut have graduated from the Leadership Enrichment for Advancing Professionals (LEAP) program. The graduates completed the intensive program designed toward building skills in all areas of nonprofit leadership.

[Learn more at northwestcf.org/LEAP](http://northwestcf.org/LEAP)



**NORTHWEST CONNECTICUT
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Questions or comments? Contact *theSteward* editor Nicole Carlson Easley at neasley@northwestcf.org or 860.626.1245

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