

*Dedicated to providing educational scholarships to Fairfield County students diagnosed with cancer*

## THE 2023 ANNUAL SUSAN FUND SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS CEREMONY



The 42nd Annual Susan Fund Scholarship Reception was once again held in June at the Easton Public Library to celebrate the accomplishments of 25 inspired individuals. They continue to demonstrate the ability to overcome their cancer diagnoses; we believe they will be future leaders and make our community a better place.



The event commenced with a welcome from the Fund's Chair, Jeff Booth. In addition to recognizing the volunteer Board of Directors, Jeff praised the Fund's Founder and Chair-Emeritus, Ann Lloyd. "Thanks to her vision and dedication over four decades, The Susan Fund has distributed more than two million dollars since its inception."

Robbi Hartt then introduced a special opportunity for Susan Fund recipients and their support network. Located in the Berkshires, "The Willow" at Mill River Village House was offered as a space to be away from home while still having all the comforts of home. The tranquil setting may act as a place of respite, healing, or celebration for guests to reconnect and relax for a few days.



Susan's older brother, David Lloyd, then offered a remembrance of his strong and spirited sister. David reflected on Susan's confident demeanor throughout her treatment and how her positive attitude kept her family's spirits elevated during that difficult period. David proudly noted that The Susan Fund is, "a living and breathing testament to Susan."

David was followed by 2023's featured recipient, Josh Rubinstein, a four-time Susan Fund scholar, who was honored to speak at the Reception. Josh expressed how those who are a part of The Susan Fund community, "have gained not just memories, but also second families; large support systems that inspire, root, and most of all reinforce ourselves with the tools needed to move on from this terrible disease." Josh believes The Susan Fund scholarships he received will allow him to achieve his dreams of becoming a pediatric oncologist and make the world a better place.

The ceremony concluded with Susan Fund Board Member, Kathy DiGiovanna, providing a brief biography of each recipient; highlighting their accomplishments and future endeavors. All 25 recipients were deserving of the grant awards received and we look forward to hearing about their future success.



## IN THIS ISSUE

From the Chairman  
page 2

About Susan  
page 2

What the Susan Fund  
Means to Me  
page 3

Meet the Board  
page 3

Reception Speech  
page 4

Reception Photos  
page 4

Scholarship Recipients  
Page 5

Become a Recipient  
page 11

Former Recipient Updates  
page 12

Support The Susan Fund  
page 13

Financials & Contributors  
page 14

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*TheSusanFund.org*

### An Update From The Susan Fund Chairman Jeff Booth

It has been another rewarding year for The Susan Fund. We celebrated the Fund's 42nd year, distributed a record amount of scholarships, updated our website to include new photo galleries and a video of this year's reception, and more. Most importantly, the Board had the pleasure of meeting each of the 25 people who received 2023 scholarships. It is impossible to overstate what an honor it is to spend time with these courageous individuals and hear about their journeys.

Because our recipients can apply for scholarships every year, we get to see many of them throughout their academic lives, we watch them grow, and we learn about the ways they "pay it forward" to help others. In fact, two of our Board members recently experienced medical issues and were aided by previous Susan Fund scholarship recipients, first a nurse at the Norwalk Hospital Emergency Room and second, an EMT in Trumbull.

A special vote of thanks to our all-volunteer Board, who make it possible to keep The Susan Fund moving forward in its fifth decade. They also make it possible for the Fund to distribute more than 90% of incoming donations directly for scholarships. Finally, a huge thank you to everyone who financially supports The Fund through their generous donations.



Susan Davis Lloyd was a typical all-American teenager, entering her senior year at Staples High School, when she discovered she had osteogenic sarcoma. Despite having her leg amputated, Susan continued to participate in school activities and hold two jobs. A cheerleader and an outstanding student, she was accepted to Colgate University. Unfortunately, her chemotherapy treatments were not effective, and she was unable to begin college.

When Susan died, her family and many friends wanted to do something positive to remember her. The Susan Fund was established with the goal of helping other young people who have been treated for cancer attain their educational goals. The Fund has continued to grow, and during the past 40 years has awarded more than \$2 million in scholarships. Through the generosity of others, Susan's memory remains very much alive.

#### Classmate Robin (Perry) Rothman Remembers Susan

Susan was a friend and an inspiration to me. We ran track together in junior high school; worked together at the movie theater in high school, and lived just down the road from one another. I remember her long flowing blonde hair before she lost it to treatments; her infectious smile which never left her beautiful face; her sense of humor; her determination as she fought cancer.

Susan was someone I looked up to, especially in the end. She was so brave. I remember visiting her at her home, it must have been near the end of her life, and she was in bed in her room and I sat down on her bed. We talked for a short time and even had a couple of laughs. She was in so much pain, but she never told me until I stood up and she winced from just that slight movement. I believe she was hurting the whole time I was sitting on the bed with her, but she wanted me to be close so she put up with the pain. She will not be forgotten and remains an inspiration.



## WHAT THE SUSAN FUND MEANS TO ME - CRAIG HETZER



OK, whoa! My name is Craig and I was among the first recipients of a scholarship from The Susan Fund back in —eh hem!— the early 1980s! I was a contemporary of Susan's! A teenager who had just finished nearly two years of aggressive chemotherapy and who had multiple surgeries as treatment for osteogenic sarcoma. It is challenging to think back that far believe it or not! It may sound odd, but The Susan Fund scholarship I received reminded me of the friends I had made during my treatment who were dealing with many of the same challenges. Even though I had unwavering support from family and previous friends (for which I will always be dizzily grateful) one aspect of having cancer that struck me, and struck me hard, was how searingly alone I felt in it except when I was with other teens who were also getting treated for bone cancer. And so, it kind of blew my mind when I learned of The Susan Fund. And knowing that the impetus for the Fund was in remembrance of Susan who also had osteogenic sarcoma, it felt like a belonging, an emotional support of some kind, as well as financial help.

I remember my crew at the pediatric oncology ward at Memorial Sloan-Kettering. There was Djenab, soft spoken and kind; there was Steven who took me under his wing and who sported a mohawk until it dwindled down to fuzz; and there was Jen who like me loved to laugh. Jen and I had our major surgeries on our legs at the same time, and we convinced the nurses to time our pain medications so that one of us could be rolled into the other's hospital room for what we called cocktail hour. We coped as best we could each in our own unique way, and we had community when there was joy, when there was sadness, when there was anguish. I can't imagine the experience without them. It was a hard time and one that brought home to me that sometimes life just sucks; it sounds a bit silly, but it had never really occurred to me that my life could be in jeopardy until then.

The money from The Susan Fund helped me attend Wesleyan University in Middletown Connecticut. At the time going to college was like a new beginning for me and an opportunity to acknowledge my illness, but also to transition away from it. Wesleyan was the funky and rigorous liberal arts school I had hoped it would be where I was able to take classes like West African Dance, New German Cinema, and Black Women and Their Fictions. I majored in English and wrote a thesis -- a collection of remembrances from having been ill -- called *Declaring the Distance*. And when I graduated (and, we're talking still in the 80s!) I drove across the United States with my dearest friend, and ended up in California where I have been since.

I currently live in the Hollywood Hills in Los Angeles with my boyfriend Raymond. I've been working in the book and paper gift industry, most recently for two great companies—Knock Knock and Em & Friends. But I am most content cooking, and being outside doing yard and gardening work.

I am thankful that The Susan Fund found me and reached out with their newsletter. I am so proud to be able to give back now. And, honored to have been among the first group of recipients.

Congratulations to all the recent recipients. Go forth!



## MEET THE BOARD - WILL LLOYD



I am proud to say that I am Susan's brother, and I've had the privilege of serving on the Board for a dozen years. For a long time, I resisted my mother's invitations to join the Board because I didn't have the time and I didn't want to relive all that Susan had endured in her battle with cancer. What a mistake that was. Every time I hear the courage and determination of the Susan Fund scholars it reminds me of how brave Susan was 40 years ago. It is inspiring to learn of the trials, tribulations, and victories. The tenacity and the desire to give back and to help



others is so incredible. I only wish I had joined the Board long before I did, and am so grateful to be part of it now.



## 2023 SCHOLARSHIP RECEPTION SPEECH - JOSH RUBINSTEIN

Hello Everyone, my name is Josh Rubinstein and like everyone here we all have been affected by cancer in several different forms. I was asked by the board of directors to speak about what The Susan Fund has done for me. Before I could even think of the logistics behind writing a speech and dealing with my stage fright the words I would be honored fell right out of my mouth. I think anyone here would do the same as cancer has brought an incredible characteristic in all of us. Selflessness and the desire to pay it forward.

As this is now my fourth time (but don't quote me on that) of being a recipient for The Susan Fund Scholarship, I have had the pleasure of being interviewed by the amazing board of directors several times, both over Zoom as well as recently in person. To me, The Susan Fund is the silver lining of how unfortunately beautiful this disease can be. Through chaos, pain, and sadness that we all have experienced we have gained not just memories, but also second families and large support systems that inspire, root, and most of all reinforce ourselves with the tools needed to move on from the terrible disease we have all experienced and live our lives to the fullest potential honoring the amazing people we have lost along the way. To name a few Susan Lloyd and Charlie Capalbo.



Just as important, The Susan Fund Scholarship has provided me as well as all of their recipients with financial aid that has allowed us to achieve our academic goals. For me, from the day I was diagnosed with this terrible disease in 2017 my academic goal as well as personal dream was to become a pediatric oncologist and be the same doctor that inspired me to keep going. I can proudly say with so much gratitude that the aid I have received from this scholarship has allowed my goal and dream to become more realistic as I begin my preparation for the medical school application process.

To finish up, The Susan Fund Scholarship is the definition of the beautiful side to this horrible disease. From the aid that they have given me over the past years that have allowed my academic and personal dreams to come closer to reality. To the support of the entire foundation, it is one of the greatest honors of my life to be a recipient of this scholarship and embody the beliefs and values of Susan Lloyd. Thank you to Ann and Will Lloyd, Susan Baron, Lesley Palange, Kathleen DiGiovanna, Brandon Held, Jeff Booth, Ed Grossman, Diane Giannitti, Matthew Garnett, Christine Cua and Kelly Frey Pollard for believing in me and supporting me as a young adult trying to make the world a better place. I will continue to embody the ideals and no quit lifestyle that Susan Lloyd has shown us all, and hope to achieve my dream of becoming a pediatric oncologist not only to make the world a better place, but also for my families. My biological family and the family I've gained through this horribly beautiful disease. Thank you.

## 2023 SCHOLARSHIP RECEPTION PHOTOS



## 2023 SCHOLARSHIP RECEPTION PHOTOS



## 2023 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



**KYLE BANCROFT**  
*Stamford, CT*  
Sacred Heart University

Kyle is a freshman this fall, majoring in Finance. Kyle's letter of recommendation states that "he is highly intelligent, motivated to achieve, mature and responsible in his behavior and determined to accomplish positive goals. He is a person of integrity, who has demonstrated leadership through an altruistic attitude and capacity to meet all challenges."

Kyle was a varsity member of the Stamford High baseball team and volunteered with the unified athletics program, which works with physically and mentally impaired students. This is Kyle's first Susan Fund award.



**ALEXIA BOCCUZZI**  
*Stamford, CT*  
University of Pennsylvania

This is Lexi's fourth Susan Fund scholarship. Lexi will be graduating in the spring of 2024 with a Bachelor in Behavioral Economics with a concentration in Public Safety and Governance.

After graduation, Lexi plans on attending law school. She is interested in focusing on the violations of first amendment rights as they pertain to education, and is looking to increase protections for students at both the higher education and K-12 levels.

This past summer, Lexi worked for Congress in the leadership office in Communications.



## 2023 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



### GIACOMO BRANCATO

*Fairfield, CT*  
Fairfield University

Giacomo is a seven-time Susan Fund scholarship recipient. He graduated from Fairfield University on the Dean's List in 2021, and is currently in the Dolan School of Business MBA Finance program. Giacomo has also been a member of Fairfield University's Division I baseball team. After having double hip replacement surgery in March 2022, he looks forward to again playing baseball when he is fully recovered and hopes that he'll be drafted by MLB.

Giacomo celebrated eight years in remission this past June. His letter of recommendation said Giacomo "has a never give up attitude and it shines right through him... He is kind and courteous to everyone and is very serious about his future. We can't wait to see what he becomes."



### JOSE CAMPANARIO

*Danbury, CT*  
Western CT State University

Due to health issues, Jose was unable to attend college last year. He hopes to continue his studies at Western Connecticut State University this Fall. Jose has a passion for finance and is considering pursuing a career in this field upon graduation.

The letter of recommendation from his precalculus honors teacher during Jose's recovery said, "he is exemplary and his determination and ability to focus are noteworthy... He completed all of the same assignments as the rest of the students, without any adaptations, and performed brilliantly. He always received me with a smile on his face, even on the days following treatment...I personally respect and admire Jose and his family." This is Jose's third Susan Fund scholarship.



### JOSH CAPPELLO

*Trumbull, CT*  
Southern CT State University

Josh's goal is to become a college professor and teach Middle Eastern history. This will require that he obtain his Master's and PhD degrees. Josh's interest in teaching runs in the family as his father teaches U.S. History and his mother, a former teacher, now works with children with learning disabilities.

Josh's letter of recommendation describes him as a "survivor and warrior who has fought his cancer diagnosis and treatment. He is a sincere, thoughtful, emotionally hardy and tenacious young man." Josh enjoys reading and basketball and being at home with his family. He is looking forward to returning to campus after a recent medical setback and taking advantage of all that college life has to offer. Josh is a three-time Susan Fund scholarship recipient.



### RYAN CAULFIELD

*Westport, CT*  
University of Pittsburgh

Ryan began a three-year Doctorate in Nursing Practice Program for Nurse Anesthesia in January 2023. Upon graduation he plans on working in a large surgical center with an anesthesia team utilizing the fullest extent of his scope of practice.

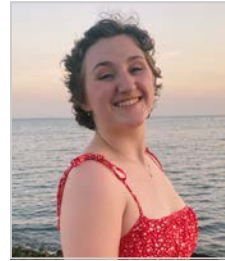
Prior to his graduate program, Ryan worked for a year and a half in the Cardiothoracic ICU at University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) Presbyterian. Ryan's letter of recommendation says that "he has developed advanced critical thinking skills at an early stage in his nursing career. He proficiently interprets patient variables to anticipate patient outcomes." This is Ryan's fifth Susan Fund award.

## 2023 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



**TIERRA GARVIN**  
*Stratford, CT*  
University of Bridgeport

Tierra will begin her senior year in the fall and expects to graduate as a RN in April 2024. She began her health services career as a home health aide/companion, then obtained her CNA license through classes at the American Red Cross and practice at the Jewish Home in Fairfield. Tierra has been a CNA for over 10 years and currently works at Brightview Senior Living in Norwalk, caring for patients overnight in the memory care unit. She is considering becoming a nurse anesthetist in the future. Her letter of recommendation states, “Tierra communicates well with her peers, Director Team and me. She follows directions extremely well and understands the needs of our senior population...I sleep well at night when she is working... She is dedicated in providing excellent service to our residents. I believe whatever endeavor she chooses to pursue in her career, she will excel.” This is Tierra’s fourth Susan Fund scholarship.



**LAUREN KELLY**  
*Norwalk, CT*  
Boston University

Lauren is in her sophomore year at Boston University, with a goal to be a speech pathologist and a specialty in singing. Lauren has a passion for crocheting and has donated pieces to Make-A-Wish CT and The Tommy Fund. She has hosted Wish Night at Make-A-Wish CT, and has raised more the \$1,000 for The Tommy Fund.

Her letter of recommendation describes Lauren as “the embodiment of resilience and strength... throughout her (cancer) treatment she remained dedicated to her academic studies and her passion for singing and theatre. Lauren holds herself to the highest standard... and persevered through cancer and the pandemic simultaneously.” This is Lauren’s second Susan Fund scholarship after delaying her freshman year due to health reasons.



**SONA KOCINSKY**  
*Trumbull, CT*  
Tufts University

Sona is a junior at Tufts University. She is pursuing a biology major and a physics minor. After graduating, Sona plans to attend medical school and specialize in pediatric oncology, ultimately engaging in clinical and research work. This summer she conducted research on osteosarcoma at St. Jude’s as a participant in their Pediatric Oncology Education Program. In her application, Sona said, “Ultimately, I aspire to be a physician-scientist who further these efforts, helping pediatric cancer patients, and impacting lives on a larger scale by researching more effective and less toxic cancer treatments.” Sona has volunteered for the Boston Harbor Ronald McDonald House, as well as Tuft University’s chapter of Strong Women, Strong Girls. She is also the Vice President of Outreach for Tutors Without Borders that offers free tutoring to pediatric cancer patients. This is Sona’s third Susan Fund scholarship.



**DANIEL KREKOSKA**  
*Stratford, CT*  
Providence College

Daniel is in his senior year and is majoring in Health Policy and minoring in Political Science. He studied in Rome in the spring of 2023 to learn about political and humanitarian issues related to the refugee crisis. By the end of his senior year, Daniel plans to intern at the Rhode Island Statehouse to gain experience in the field of politics. His goal is to be ranked in the top 10% of his class and to find a job working for the government or for a non-profit. Daniel is also considering law school in the future and becoming a lawyer. Daniel’s letter of recommendation noted his “determination, character, and commitment to academic excellent shine brightly”, and an Assistant Director at his college states, “I have been ecstatic to witnessing his contribution to the Providence College community.” This is Daniel’s fourth Susan Fund scholarship.

## 2023 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



### **BRENT MCCREESH**

*Southport, CT*  
Sacred Heart University

Brent is a three-time Susan Fund scholarship recipient who is currently in his junior year at Sacred Heart University.

This past summer Brent worked at the Michael K Show where he picked highlights for the show. Brent also worked at the YES network as a ticker choosing headlines for their crawl.

Brent continues co-lead the Sacred Heart University chess team as a Team Captain and has played against Wesleyan, Yale, Temple and USC. Brent's Chess Club advisor states, "I have witnessed his continued growth as a person, student, and a teammate among his peers on the chess team."



### **FLEURANDA METELLUS**

*Stamford, CT*  
Norwalk Community College

Fleuranda will be pursuing a degree in social work at Norwalk Community College in the fall and plans to finish her Bachelor's and Master's degrees.

Her letter of recommendation said, "She is a strong and diligent student... Fleuranda's writing is clear, forceful, and interesting. She knows how to take a strong stand and defend it, and she can integrate the ideas of others into her own work with clarity and nuance. I recommend her for your scholarship with no reservations."

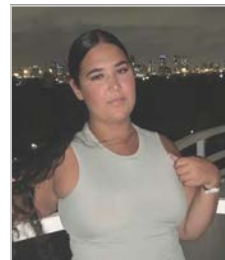
Fleuranda has volunteered at the Darien Thrift Shop and made care kits for women in the local shelter. This is her first Susan Fund scholarship.



### **TESS MICHAELSEN**

*Newtown, CT*  
Boston University Wheelock  
Child & Family Centered Care

One of Tess's career goals is to promote optimal response to medical treatment and care by minimizing stress, while also facilitating communication between medical personnel, the patient, and the family. She has volunteered for Project Sunshine through the TelePlay program, where Tess provided play opportunities to children and their families in hospital settings. The aspects of TelePlay are to increase emotional relief and decrease stress while promoting joy. Tess has also been a program staff member for four years at The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp. She has also served as an intern at Boston's Children Hospital in her pursuit of a Child Life and Family Life Master's degree. Her letter of recommendation said, "She is resourceful, hardworking, and driven to always find a solution. Tess sets a great role model for others." This is Tess's first Susan Fund scholarship.



### **SOFIA PETRAFESA**

*Stamford, CT*  
Norwalk Community College

Sofia is working toward her Associate of Science degree from Norwalk Community College's Nursing program and plans to complete her education with a Bachelor's of Science from Charter Oak State College. Her ultimate career goal is to provide compassionate care for patients and families in clinical settings as a pediatric oncology nurse. Sofia has previously participated in the Cycle for Survival event as a team leader for #Likeawarrior, raising funds for rare cancer research for Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. Sofia's letter of recommendation said, "she is an inspirational role model to her peers and community and deserves recognition for her strength and determination. I consider her to be highly respectful of others, even under the most trying circumstance... Indeed, she is an inspiration." This is Sofia's fourth Susan Fund award.



## 2023 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



### **DECLAN RATNER**

*New Canaan, CT*  
Sacred Heart University

Declan began his college career this fall. As part of the 4+2 dual degree Physician Assistant program, Declan is also majoring in Biology. In his application Declan said, “My compulsion to give back, a value instilled early in my life by church and family, established itself on a high school mission trip to feed and clothe the homeless. The experience proved life changing, because it left me with joy and satisfaction.” Declan’s letter of recommendation said he “put an incredible amount of work into his studies and effectively incorporated feedback to improve on his considerable skills... Despite having a rigorous course schedule and sustaining an injury that kept him out of the lacrosse season, Declan was resilient, always possessing the same affable character and positive mental outlook.” This is Declan’s first Susan Fund scholarship.



### **JOSHUA RUBINSTEIN**

*Trumbull, CT*  
University of Maryland  
College Park

Josh will be a senior this fall at the University of Maryland. This is his fourth Susan Fund award. Upon graduation, Josh plans to attend medical school which he hopes will have an MD/Masters of Public Health program so that he may be a doctor as well as a health advocate in the future.

Josh’s long term goal is to become a pediatric oncologist, and to continue to do more extensive research in the field of immunotherapy. His letter of recommendation states “the lessons Josh has learned from his overall life-changing story has given him traits and experience that I believe will undoubtedly make him succeed in any path he chooses.”



### **KEYLIN SALAZAR**

*Stamford, CT*  
University of Connecticut

This is Keylin’s first Susan Fund scholarship. She will be a freshman this fall and plans to major in social work. Her ultimate goal is to become a clinical social worker with children. She would like to help children with cancer have the tools they need to heal physically and believes they can succeed despite their diagnoses.

Keylin’s letter of recommendation states that “Keylin is an incredible young woman with resiliency and strength. She is committed to working to build the best version of herself.”



### **NATHANIEL SMIT**

*Stamford, CT*  
Deans College

This is Nate’s second Susan Fund award and he will be a sophomore this fall majoring in Psychology at Dean’s College. During the summer, he worked helping pediatric patients with holistic therapy in Stamford, as well as at the YMCA in Stamford. Upon graduation, Nate hopes to be in the mental health field as a social worker or therapist in a pediatric hospital “to help people get to whom they want to be and live happier lives.”

Nate’s letter of recommendation states “he is an engaging, kind and caring person to interact with and is an inquisitive and dedicated student.”

## 2023 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

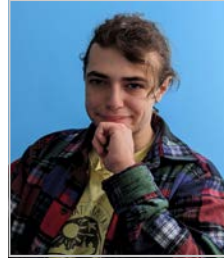


### **JAMES SPENGLER**

*Fairfield, CT*  
University of Dayton

James will be a freshman this fall at the University of Dayton majoring in Sports Management/Marketing. While in college and beyond, he hopes to continue his life's work in spreading awareness of and raising money for pediatric cancer patients and their families.

This past summer, James traveled to Lourdes, France on a spiritual pilgrimage. During this time he spent ten days serving and protecting the sick on their spiritual and healing journey to the Blessed Mother. James also has established the 9<sup>th</sup> Floor Foundation to raise money for families fighting pediatric cancer. He has raised \$10k for Kids for Kids Going For Gold, where Fairfield Ludlow High dedicates one game in the month of September to pediatric cancer. This is James' first Susan Fund scholarship.



### **RYAN TUCKER**

*Wilton, CT*  
Champlain College

Ryan, a two-time Susan Fund scholarship recipient, will be a senior this fall at Champlain College. Upon graduation with a Bachelor degree in Computer Game Programming, he hopes to go down one of two main roads. One, development at a game publishing company, or two, as an independent developer for video games. During this past spring, Ryan studied abroad in Montreal and was able to develop an arcade-themed game in 10 weeks, where you are the character in a pinball game.

Ryan's letter of recommendation states "Mr. Tucker is a natural leader, effortlessly fostering an air of congeniality among his peers. He empathizes with other students as a matter of course, silently but conspicuously prioritizing their emotional needs."



### **JACK UNGAR**

*Darien, CT*  
University of Richmond

Jack will be a senior at the University of Richmond this fall majoring in Psychology. His long-held goal is to be a professional firefighter in a major urban area. Over the last year he has volunteered with three organizations: the Noroton Fire Department, Darien EMS Post 53, and the Christina Fire Company in Delaware. On Jack's application, he wrote, "I am very grateful to be a member of these organizations, and do not know what I'd do without them." This summer he also worked at the Darien Parks & Recreation Department. Jack's letter of recommendation concludes by saying he is, "a remarkable boy who has become an impressive young man". This is Jack's fourth Susan Fund scholarship.



### **WILL VARVARO**

*Easton, CT*  
The New School

Will is a senior at the New School this fall majoring in Media Studies. His main career goals are film producing, pre-production, creative development and creative writing. This year he plans on self-publishing his first book for his Creative Writing major, as well as producing and directing an independent short film for his Media Studies major. Will plans on applying for numerous internships and would like to work in a variety of media and creative outlets. He states that "working in the entertainment and art world has always been my passion and I will continue to pursue this in as many capacities as I can." This is Will's fourth Susan Fund scholarship.

## 2023 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



### **MATTHEW VIGLUCCI**

*New Fairfield, CT*  
SUNY Oneonta

Matt is a junior and a three-time Susan Fund Scholarship recipient. His career goal is to work in sound production and the orchestration areas of the music industry. Another goal is to learn the culture and language of Japan, so he can compose for Japanese Anime soundtracks. To that end, during his spring semester Matt attended courses at Seinan Gakuin University in Fukuoka, Japan. While in Japan, he volunteered to participate in a community service program teaching English to young children. He has also been a fundraiser for the local Relay for Life in New Fairfield, CT. Matt's letter of recommendation said, "He has distinguished himself as a dedicated and responsible student, both in class and in his extracurricular activities."



### **CHARLES WATSON**

*Westport, CT*  
Gap Year / Utah Tech

Charlie is taking a gap year and plans on attending Utah Tech in the Fall of 2024 to study Digital Film and dabble in theatre and acting. Charlie has a passion for musical theater and was a member of the Staples Players and the Staples Orphenians. For two years, he has been in a pre-professional program called 1022m, an internship program where Charlie spent time during school and summers with other students producing short film and feature film, writing, photography and post-production. Charlie's letter of recommendation states that "he is one of the kindest souls I have ever met. He is warm and funny. His personality shines in his vintage wardrobe." This is Charlie's first Susan Fund award.



### **MARIA WEYER**

*Westport, CT*  
Sarah Lawrence College





Maria is a two-time Susan Fund scholarship recipient and is in her senior year at Sarah Lawrence College.

Acting continues to be a passion for her and upon graduation she hopes to do screen acting auditions in New York City where she would like to find an agency to represent her. Maria enjoyed being involved with a few student films this past summer.

Her letter of recommendation states "Maria is future-oriented and will undoubtedly bring commitment and passion to her theatre studies."

## **HOW TO BECOME A SUSAN FUND RECIPIENT**



-  Be a current resident of Fairfield County
-  Have been diagnosed with cancer sometime in one's life
-  Be attending or planning on attending an accredited post high school institution of higher learning
-  Fill out a Scholarship Application at [TheSusanFund.org](https://TheSusanFund.org), available January 1st and due by April 1st



## FORMER BOARD MEMBER & RECIPIENT - LOGAN BARER



About 10 years ago, I was honored to be a recipient of a grant from The Susan Fund that was integral in sending me to Ithaca College. Without their help, I'm not sure I would have been able to attend the school at which I had such an incredible, formative four years. I was honored then, and am both honored and grateful now.



I underwent treatment for Stage III Melanoma when I was nine years old, and as you all can imagine, there are very few silver linings to going through such an experience. Many ask about Make-A-Wish, mostly because they're the most widely known, but The Susan Fund grants wishes that I would argue are more important. Make-A-Wish sent me to Alaska for a week, but The Susan Fund sent me to Ithaca College for four years. I brought home salmon from Alaska, but I brought home a college degree from Ithaca. I can promise you the salmon did not last nearly as long as the degree has, and the salmon is not atop my resumé.



I currently live in Los Angeles with my wife, who is a pediatrician of all things, and continue to view The Susan Fund as a group of people who set me up for long-term success. I am grateful for this, and for all of those who made it possible. It thrills me to see the scope of the organization today, and how many other people in the position I was ten years ago are being supported by such wonderful people. Happy ten-year anniversary Susan Fund - Thank you!

## HONORING FORMER SUSAN FUND RECIPIENT CHARLIE CAPALBO



On February 18, 2023, Fairfield high schools' hockey team honored our former Susan Fund recipient, Charlie Capalbo. Charlie was 23 years old when he passed away last year after battling cancer four times. Charlie received his first Susan Fund scholarship in 2018 and attended Fairfield University where he was majoring in Business and minoring in Psychology.

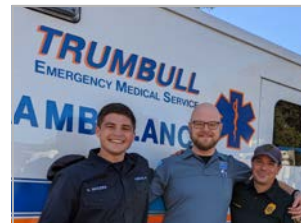
Charlie played as a goalie for Fairfield's Co-Op hockey team. It was his passion and he was an outstanding goaltender. His coaches described him as "coachable, passionate and energetic... possessing an unparalleled work ethic." The current Fairfield goalie stated, "Charlie's obviously very important to Fairfield. He set the culture. So, it's nice to build off his legacy."

Fairfield retired Charlie's number in a ceremony held before the start of the game. The program framed a No. 30 jersey that will hang at the Wonderland of Ice in Bridgeport. Two balloons making up a large "30" floated behind the home bench, and the rink lobby was full of photos including Charlie's family and friends, as well as Charlie with Rangers and Bruins players.

Charlie's parents, Anthony and Jenny Capalbo, his brother Will, and his girlfriend, Peyton Siegel were in attendance. They also unveiled a painting by the Norwalk graffiti artist who goes by Sivefingaz on Instagram. It hangs near the entryway from the rink to the Fairfield locker room. Charlie's younger brother, Will Capalbo wore 30 to commemorate his brother's hockey legacy and stated, "Now we have Charlie up in the corner. He's going to be able to watch every game from that view. We're very grateful for that picture up there."



## FORMER RECIPIENT UPDATE - TOM COLE



Hey folks,

My name is Tom Cole and I'm a pediatric cancer survivor and prior recipient of The Susan Fund scholarship. In 2011, I was treated with chemo and radiotherapy for Ewing's Sarcoma, a pediatric bone cancer that affects about one in one million children worldwide. After finishing high school, The Susan Fund was generous enough to award me a scholarship to attend UConn studying political science. Over time, I realized this wasn't the place for me, and I eventually dropped out of school and moved on with life. Life moves in mysterious ways, and has brought me back to The Susan Fund in just such a surprising way.

I am working now as an EMT with Trumbull EMS, a "third service" model agency that serves the Town of Trumbull as a municipal agency, responding to ~6,000 calls for service a year in a town of ~37,000 people. I love working in emergency medical services. I know what it is like to be the patient, and I know what to look for in a good provider. I strive to emulate all the wonderful doctors, nurses and techs that helped me get better when I was sick. I get to help people on their worst days and constantly advance my knowledge of medicine and patient care while serving the town I grew up in.

Recently, I bumped into a nice woman and her husband while at work. It took a little story swapping to finally put it together, but me and his wife: Susan Baron realized that the passing thought of "she/he looks familiar!" was spot on, and we'd met through The Susan Fund. It was so nice to see her again and she asked me to update all the kind folks involved with the Fund on what's been happening with me.

I am more than happy to say to you all that I'm doing excellent and will continue my career in medicine. I plan on attending paramedic school next year, through the Bridgeport Hospital - Echo Hose Ambulance partner program. Paramedics are advanced providers who can truly save lives in the field, and I can't wait to be a part of patient's stories the way my disease, providers and The Susan fund are a part of mine.

Yours,  
Tom

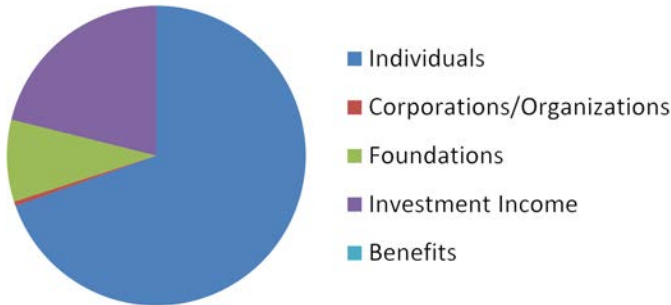
## "WILLOW" AT MILL RIVER VILLAGE HOUSE RETREAT

Robbi and Bob Hartt have created a special sanctuary that they wish to share with Susan Fund recipients and their support network. Having experienced the pain and loss of family members due to cancer, they spent four years restoring a 1795 farmhouse in the beautiful Berkshires where they hope cancer patients and survivors, their parents and families on similar journeys can come to find respite. Whether you are celebrating a remission, needing a reprieve after learning of a difficult diagnosis, or dealing with the loss of a beloved family member, "The Willow" at Mill River Village House is a tranquil setting to reconnect and relax for a few days, and is a short drive away from a rich variety of performing arts, museums, hiking trails, restaurants and ski resorts. The Hartts are extending a generous invitation to stay for two-nights at no cost to eligible guests. For more information, contact Kelly Frey Pollard at [SusanFund@gmail.com](mailto:SusanFund@gmail.com).

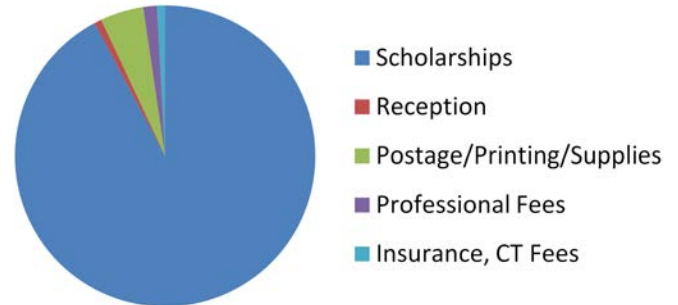


# FINANCIALS

## Where our money comes from...



## Where our money goes...



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In Memory of Karen Rysz  
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In Memory of Nadia Van Camp  
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Aaron Costa  
John Davidson  
Sorrell Downing  
Michael Goldrosen  
Ken Lempit  
Paul Piasecki  
Ron Porter  
Jimmy Saunders  
John Secco  
Laurie Woog  
In Honor of My Dad, Richard Davis  
Kathryn McDermott

In Honor of Kathleen  
DiGiovanna's birthday  
In Honor of Sarah Ellis  
Sarah Ellis Cluck  
In Honor of Ann Lloyd  
Joel Davis  
Richard Davis  
Dorothy and Jon Fox  
Jon and Ann Nicholson  
Jane Ross  
In Honor of Kelly Frey Pollard  
Karen Frey Jacobs  
Lee and Dan Yin  
In Honor of Staples Class 1980  
Nancy Kail  
In Honor of Susan Lloyd  
Dana and Mike McCreesh  
In Honor of Susas  
Patrick Ryll  
In Honor of Jack Ungar  
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In Honor of Matthew Viglucci  
George and Luisa Viglucci  
In Honor of Hans & Henri Williams  
Barbara Williams  
In Honor of the Zarifis Family  
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- Mail a check to The Susan Fund at 458 Newtown Avenue, Norwalk, CT 06851
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- Enroll in an Employer Matching Gift Program, if available
- Consult your financial advisor about Donor-Advised Fund distributions, or the tax advantages of Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCD) from your IRA or appreciated securities

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