



2015 ANNUAL HIGHLIGHTS



The Peter and Elizabeth C. **TOWER** Foundation



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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends:

2015 was an exceptional year for The Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation. We tried new and different approaches to our work, pushing us to think differently about how to make a more sustained impact through our grantmaking.

Young people with intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities, mental health and substance use disorders remain our priority. Through our Core Programs and Service Portfolio, we awarded a significant number of grants in 2015 and are pleased to recognize the interesting and successful work of these organizations.

We continue to champion capacity building work through our Strengthening Our Partners Portfolio. We held our first-ever Learning Disabilities Grantee Convening event in March. It was a tremendous success and it went a long way towards bringing together grantees from across our regions to share ideas and make connections. Feedback indicated that our grantees were hungry for this type of event and found it to be incredibly beneficial. We also spent a significant part of the year talking to organizations and other funders and produced a comprehensive report on capacity building activities and perspectives in the Tower regions. The information is rich and will help us assess and improve our work going forward.

We are very excited about our new ventures as well, particularly our investment in the Reimagine Learning Fund through New Profit, a nonprofit venture philanthropy fund. While this is a new funding strategy for the Foundation, we believe this investment has tremendous potential to accelerate change and transform our country's educational approach, particularly for students with learning disabilities.

Our energy and enthusiasm is pushing us to do more, to try different strategies, and take more risks. I hope you will take the time to learn more about each of these initiatives in the pages ahead.

Sincerely,



Tracy A. Sawicki
Executive Director



"We tried new and different approaches to our work, pushing us to think differently about how to make a more sustained impact through our grantmaking. Our energy and enthusiasm is pushing us to do more, to try different strategies, and take more risks."

FUNDING PORTFOLIO OVERVIEW

The Foundation has three Funding Portfolios from which grants are made: Core Programs and Services, Strengthening Our Partners (Capacity Building) and Healthy Communities.

CORE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Grants in this Portfolio fund core programs and services that seek to prevent (where possible) or directly address the needs of individuals and families affected by substance abuse, mental illness, intellectual disabilities, and learning disabilities.

STRENGTHENING OUR PARTNERS (Capacity Building)

Grants in this Portfolio support efforts to strengthen organizations and programs within each of the Foundation's substantive focus areas. This includes providing training dollars or otherwise supporting staff members who incorporate evidence-based practices into their programming; funding innovative projects aimed at increasing organizational efficiencies and/or effectiveness; offering technology solutions to support strategic and programmatic goals; and engaging in other forms of capacity building. Funded activities may be population-specific or may be universal in scope. These efforts are undertaken in the hope of bolstering partner



organizations and advancing the substance abuse, mental health, intellectual disabilities, and learning disabilities fields.

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

The Tower Foundation's vision for a Healthy Community is one in which young people live high quality, purposeful, fulfilling lives.

Through our Healthy Communities approach, the Foundation aims to improve the health and wellness of children, adolescents, and young adults facing or at risk for intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities, mental illness, and substance abuse. Our strategy for Healthy Communities involves convening local stakeholders to identify the issues and needs relevant to children, adolescents, and young adults in their communities. In response to these needs, the Foundation seeks to collaborate with new and existing community coalitions to foster cooperative, integrated

systems that deliver effective, holistic, accessible services. Grants in this Portfolio support initiatives where leaders mobilize around an issue or set of issues that affect an entire community.





TOWER INVESTS IN REIMAGINING LEARNING

While supporting individual grantees remains a central part of The Tower Foundation mission, our work in 2015 included a brand new way of investing our resources and working in a new way to make an impact. For the first time in our history, we made a significant investment in a venture philanthropy fund with the goal of transforming the way learning happens across the country.

The Reimagine Learning Fund is a focus area of New Profit, a nonprofit venture philanthropy fund with an emphasis on social innovation to make lasting systemic change. Reimagine Learning aims to support schools and communities in the creation of learning environments that unleash individual promise and creativity in all children, including the millions of kids who are marginalized or disengaged in school because of learning and attention issues or social/emotional issues.

Reimagine Learning aims to create an education system where every child can realize his or her potential using three core principles: that there is no such thing as the “average learner,” so instructional approaches are personalized to identify and meet the differing talents and needs of each child; that cognitive, social and emotional skills are equally

valued and cultivated; and that students have a very real say in their own learning journey to engage young people and encourage lifelong learners. The fund supports a varied group of organizations and approaches across the country.

The Tower Foundation’s decision to make the lead investment, launching the Reimagine Learning Focus Fund, was the shared mission of supporting those who struggle in school because of learning disabilities, and because few in the educational reform movement are considering the needs of these children. Partnering with New Profit and other funders allows us to leverage our investment and have a greater impact on organizations doing important work in this area. Also, New Profit’s advocacy track record at the federal and state levels has the potential to knock down barriers to new learning approaches and was another factor in our decision.

While working in this new way requires more staff time and can be challenging, we

believe there is great long term potential in supporting this work for children of all learning abilities. Our goal is to better understand what works and if new approaches can be replicated in smaller markets such as those in Tower’s geographic regions.



BUILDING CAPACITY TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS

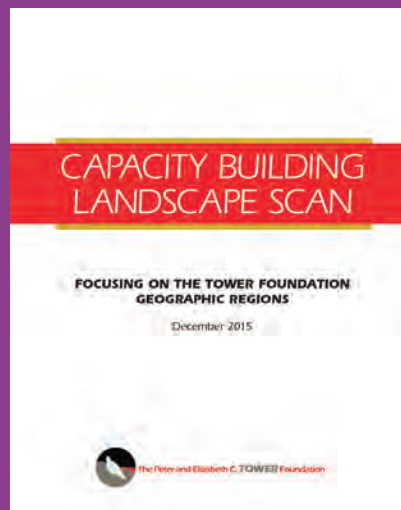
Helping our partners build their capacity to achieve their mission is one of the Tower Foundation's focus areas through our Strengthening Our Partners Portfolio. While program funding is always important, we know helping organizations with the infrastructure they need to deliver programs can be just as critical. In 2015, we awarded over \$1.7 million dollars from this Portfolio for a variety of efforts including: technology, strategic and communication planning, organizational development, leadership and board development, and grant writing courses, to name a few.

Our technology initiative accounts for roughly 50 percent of our capacity building support and assists organizations align technology with their mission, strategic plans and work processes. We provide funds to hire technology consultants to evaluate needs and develop a technology plan to help our partners achieve their goals. We will also provide matching funds to implement plans in organizations demonstrating how technology will improve their efforts. We recognize that having high functioning hardware/software/financial reporting systems goes a long way in helping nonprofits spend more energy and time on programming and mission-related work. Some of the support we provided in 2015 included:

- Calmer Choice, a nonprofit based in Barnstable County, provides prevention programming in 18 schools and helps youth gain the skills necessary for healthy social and emotional learning. The Foundation provided the group a technology grant in 2015, which helped Calmer Choice hire a consultant to conduct a thorough analysis of current and future needs and additional support to implement its technology plan.
- The Foundation provided funding to the Martha's Vineyard Donors Collaborative for training activities for area organizations and for

the Nonprofit Resource Center's subscription to the Foundation Directory Online. Housed at the local library, nonprofits from around the Island may use this resource to identify potential funders. The Collaborative offered a full-day grant writing and research workshop, during which attendees did their own research using the Foundation Center Database with the guidance of the session leader.

- Our small grants program allows the Foundation to respond to short-term organizational needs in a simplified and expedited manner. Express Yourself (ExYo), an organization serving underserved youth with mental illness through the creative arts in the North Shore, was able to hire a consultant and embark on a strategic planning process with their small grant funding and develop a strategic fundraising plan. This type of planning is essential but difficult for many nonprofits to afford.



This year we began exploring how we can be more intentional about supporting organizations and funding efforts that help position them for long term success by learning more about the current capacity building environment. In our Capacity Building Landscape Scan, we interviewed funders in New York and Massachusetts to learn about their involvement in efforts already underway. We also spoke with consultants working with nonprofits in this arena for their perspective, including where there may be gaps. While the responses were diverse, we heard the most critical needs are in the areas of leadership development, board development and partnership

opportunities. The good news is that the report confirmed our current approach and highlighted the need to do more. A survey of nonprofits is underway to get their perspective on the current capacity building landscape and the priorities. We will continue to learn more about this area so we can be more effective and strategic in our approach to capacity building.

GETSET INITIATIVE GRADUATES

In November 2015, eight organizations "graduated" from the GetSET (Success in Extraordinary Times) Initiative, a capacity building program designed to help health, behavioral health, and human services organizations strengthen their infrastructure in a time of changing financial realities. As part of the program, an organizational consultant is paired with a nonprofit to assess strengths, and to develop and implement a capacity building plan. GetSET was created by the Health Foundation for Western & Central New York with participation from the John R. Oishei Foundation and The Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation.

One of our graduates had this to say:

"GetSET gave us access to expertise and resources that we would never have had otherwise. Our consultant exposed us to ideas and methods that most nonprofit organizations never get exposure to."



"It was truly a great experience. I walked in to present one idea and left with multiple ideas on potential new program concepts. The sharing of ideas in a small setting was much better than attending a large scale conference."

– Michael Helman, Executive Director,
Learning Disabilities Association of Western New York

FACILITATING CONNECTIONS

We have come to realize The Tower Foundation has an important role to play in bringing together organizations that can learn from each other. We put a greater emphasis in 2015 on finding ways to help make connections between organizations and across geographic locations to great success!

LEARNING DISABILITIES CONVENING

The response was overwhelmingly positive last March when The Tower Foundation held its Learning Disabilities Grantee Convening to network, share and learn from one another! The event marked the Foundation's first convening and included a diverse group of people engaged in the learning disabilities field including grantees, educators, funders, and community-based organizations from Massachusetts and Western New York.

Held at the historic Hotel Lafayette in downtown Buffalo, the two-day event included networking opportunities, nationally known speakers, workshops and grantee presentations regarding their work. Speakers from the National Center for Learning Disabilities, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Poses Family Foundation were featured and shared information including capturing insights from young adults with learning disabilities, how neuroscience is advancing the field, and new resources for parents.

The event grew out of the Learning Disabilities Tower Planning Study created in 2013 after the Foundation narrowed its focus from general education to supporting some of the most underserved students. As part of the Planning Study, seven organizations in the Learning Disabilities field were invited to submit project ideas for funding. The aim was to gain a better sense of what was working, to strengthen our relationship with providers and to promote creative thinking and innovative service delivery. The Learning Disabilities Grantee Convening provided a great way to share the work of these grantees as well as to share best practices and to connect those working in the field for further collaboration and networking.



YOUTH AT RISK CONFERENCE IN ESSEX COUNTY

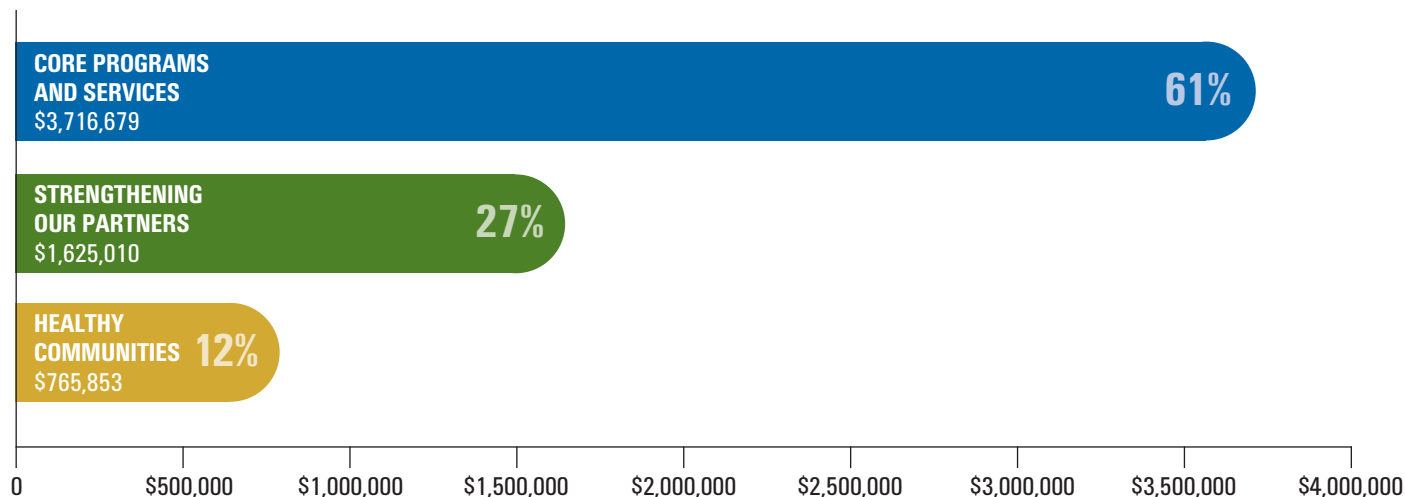
The Tower Foundation has also played a role in bringing together a community committed to its young people. For the past ten years, The Tower Foundation has contributed funding for the annual Youth-At-Risk Conference in Essex County. The Conference is a hallmark in the community, with over 750 educators, afterschool providers, law enforcement, social service and other agencies gathering for a full day of education, professional development and networking. The result has been greater

understanding of the role of other organizations, more collaboration and sharing of best practices to better serve young people.

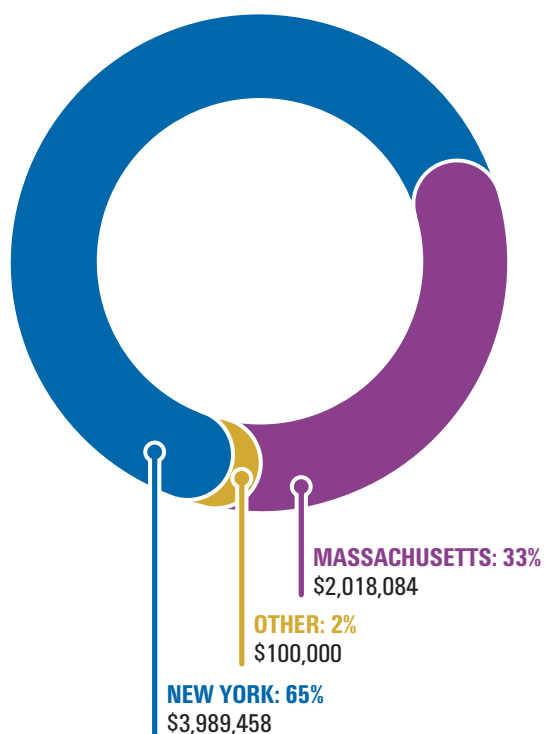
GRANTS AWARDED – 2015

2015 GRANTS AWARDED
TOTAL: \$6,107,542

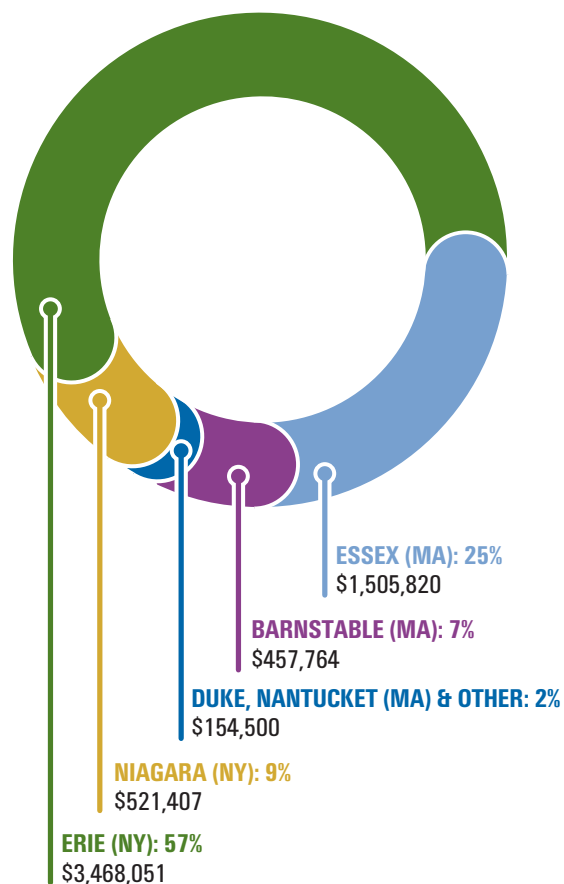
2015 GRANTS AWARDED BY CATEGORY



2015 GRANTS AWARDED BY STATE



2015 GRANTS AWARDED BY COUNTY



GRANTS AWARDED – 2015

Core Programs and Services

MASSACHUSETTS

Children's Center of Faith United Methodist Church <i>Screening and Assessment with Ages & Stages & Teaching Strategies Tools</i>	\$39,836
Family Services of Merrimack Valley, Inc. <i>Therapeutic Mentoring</i>	\$172,000
Health Law Advocates <i>Substance Abuse Parity in Barnstable and Essex Counties</i>	\$141,053
Lynn Economic Opportunity <i>Mental Health Preschool Classroom & Parent Support</i>	\$87,508
Roca, Inc. <i>Reduce Substance Abuse/Behavioral Intervention w/High-Risk Young Men</i>	\$390,700
Salem State University Foundation <i>Alternative Text & Assistive Technology</i>	\$114,727

NEW YORK

Cazenovia Recovery Systems <i>Housing Match Funds</i>	\$40,451
Cazenovia Recovery Systems <i>Trauma-Informed Care</i>	\$141,465
Compeer West, Inc. <i>Peer Support</i>	\$203,145
Erie County Council for the Prevention of Alcohol and Substance Abuse <i>Project CHOICES</i>	\$349,422
Erie County Medical Center <i>First-Episode Psychosis Program – Addressing Needs of Youth</i>	\$97,995
Eye-to-Eye, Inc. <i>Cluster Expansion Model, Buffalo Chapters</i>	\$397,110
Family Help Center, Inc. <i>Children's Center for Success</i>	\$75,478
Kids Escaping Drugs <i>Face 2 Face in the Workplace</i>	\$244,359
Learning Disabilities of Western New York <i>Equitable Education Advocacy Program</i>	\$214,270
Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center <i>Close the Gaps</i>	\$339,154
People Inc. <i>Transitional Life Quality Coaching</i>	\$231,754

Villa Maria College <i>The Achieve Program</i>	\$136,252
Western New York Independent Living, Inc. <i>Transition Supports for Young Adults with Co-Occurring Diagnosis</i>	\$200,000

OTHER

Poses Family Foundation <i>Understood.org</i>	\$100,000
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Strengthening Our Partners (Capacity Building)

MASSACHUSETTS

Calmer Choice <i>Technology – Implementation</i>	\$93,635
Cape Cod & Islands Child Development Program <i>Small Grant</i>	\$22,500
Cape Cod & Islands Child Development Program <i>Technology – Implementation</i>	\$125,000
Cape Cod Community College Educational Foundation <i>Small Grant</i>	\$8,000
Essex County Community Foundation <i>Program and Planning Grant</i>	\$145,000
Express Yourself, Inc. <i>Small Grant</i>	\$23,925
Family and Children's Services Of Nantucket <i>Small Grant</i>	\$30,000
Family Services of Merrimack Valley, Inc. <i>Small Grant</i>	\$27,036
Institute for Nonprofit Management and Leadership <i>Leadership Development</i>	\$33,000
Island Autism Group, Inc. (The) <i>Small Grant</i>	\$24,500
Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty To Children <i>Small Grant</i>	\$19,900
McLean Hospital Corporation <i>Pilot Study-Drug/Alcohol Refusal Skills for those with Intellectual Disabilities</i>	\$82,500
Monomoy Regional School District <i>Small Grant</i>	\$10,411
Regional Capacity Building Initiatives <i>Barnstable, Dukes, Essex and Nantucket Counties</i>	\$36,165

GRANTS AWARDED – 2015

NEW YORK

Aspire of Western New York <i>Technology – Implementation</i>	\$103,057
Baker Victory Services <i>High Needs Mental Health Client Services Capacity Building Project</i>	\$56,317
Buffalo Hearing & Speech Center, Inc. <i>Small Grant</i>	\$6,000
Cazenovia Recovery Systems, Inc. <i>Fellowship House Merger Support</i>	\$130,000
Child & Adolescent Treatment Services <i>Technology – Implementation</i>	\$65,000
Dale Association (The) <i>Technology – Implementation</i>	\$59,866
Erie County Council for the Prevention of Alcohol and Substance Abuse <i>Small Grant</i>	\$2,100
Every Person Influences Children <i>Technology – Planning</i>	\$15,000
Family Help Center <i>Technology – Planning</i>	\$22,095
Gow School (The) <i>Small Grant</i>	\$10,000
Healthy Community Alliance <i>Small Grant</i>	\$8,000
Heritage Centers <i>Technology – Implementation</i>	\$125,000
Hilbert College <i>Small Grant</i>	\$13,000
Institute for Healthcare Communication <i>Pilot Communication Skills Training: Mental Health</i>	\$54,821

Jericho Road <i>Technology – Planning</i>	\$29,960
New Directions Youth and Family Services, Inc. <i>Technology – Implementation</i>	\$121,248
Road Less Traveled Productions <i>Small Grant</i>	\$4,000
Royalton-Hartland Central School District <i>Small Grant</i>	\$1,139
Suicide Prevention and Crisis Service, Inc. <i>Technology – Implementation</i>	\$125,000
Summit Center (The) fka Summit Educational Resources <i>Small Grant</i>	\$28,000
Regional Capacity Building Initiatives <i>Erie and Niagara Counties</i>	\$31,889

Healthy Communities

MASSACHUSETTS

Massachusetts Advocates for Children <i>Trauma Sensitive Schools Demonstration Project</i>	\$135,000
National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD) <i>Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) partner w/Cape Cod Collaborative</i>	\$291,853

NEW YORK

Erie County Department of Health <i>Opioid Overdose Response</i>	\$64,000
Hillside Family of Agencies <i>Family-Driven Planning</i>	\$275,000

Discretionary

Total Discretionary	\$550,000
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MISSION, FOCUS, STAFF AND BOARD

MISSION

The Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation supports community programming that results in children, adolescents, and young adults affected by substance abuse, learning disabilities, mental illness, and intellectual disabilities achieving their full potential. The Foundation is dedicated to societal impact through healthy communities and capacity building. We work diligently to foster a sense of empowerment and an environment of collaboration.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

The Tower Foundation remains focused on improving the lives of young people in the communities where Tower family members have lived, worked, and raised their children. Most grants support organizations or community-based collaboration in Western New York (Erie and Niagara Counties) and Eastern Massachusetts (Barnstable, Dukes, Essex, and Nantucket Counties).

STAFF

Tracy A. Sawicki, *Executive Director*
 Donald W. Matteson, *Chief Program Officer*
 Charles E. Colston, Jr., *Program Officer*
 Nicholas G. Randell, *Program Officer*
 Megan T. MacDavey, *Program Officer*
 Kathleen E. Andriaccio, *Administrative Manager*
 Dawn M. Pytlik, *Office Manager/Executive Assistant*

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

John Blair
 Deborah Brayton
 John Byrnes
 Mollie Byrnes
 Dale Demyanick
 Robert Doyle
 Cindy Doyle
 Sherif Nada
 Donna Owens
 Joseph Rosa
 James Weiss
 David Welbourn

Pictured above is The Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation Staff
Back row: Megan MacDavey, Don Matteson, Nick Randell, and Chuck Colston
Front Row: Dawn Pytlik, Tracy Sawicki, and Kathy Andriaccio

The Peter and Elizabeth C. TOWER Foundation

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