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Group of Nonprofit Executives Complete United Way Learning Circle Program

For the past year, these leaders have focused on strengthening the delivery of services and building the capacity of Rhode Island's nonprofit sector

PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND (Dec. 22, 2022) — Learning into an innovative opportunity to better their organizations and in turn strengthen the ability of the state's nonprofit sector to serve Rhode Islanders, a group of 11 nonprofit leaders recently completed United Way's Executive Director Learning Circle program. The fellows spent a year in the program, and their achievement was celebrated on Dec. 19 during a gathering at United Way's Providence office.

"It is difficult out there right now for nonprofits as they wrestle with many of the same challenges as our small businesses, but also with tremendous demand for their services and dwindling resources," said Rachel Samal, United Way's director of community investments. "And at the same time, the organizations these leaders represent are better equipped today to continue their vital work. I am absolutely inspired by the commitment these professionals have to our community."

Over the course of twelve months, participants took part in a series of workshops that focused on strategic planning, fund development, risk management, board engagement, and more. One-on-one coaching allowed them to separately dive deeper into their own organizational specifics, while group efforts offered scenario sharing and practical experience with real-time challenges. Each program graduate may now apply their experience toward credits for an M.A. at Roger Williams University's School of Studies Community Development program.

"This program gave me something I felt was missing in other programs, and that was reliability," said Jonathan Goodman of Student Clinic for Immigrant Justice. "We understood what each other were talking about and going through, and that led to really unique learning and support. What I took from this experience will no doubt make a meaningful difference."

The Executive Director Learning Circle is facilitated by longtime nonprofit executive Michael Fournier and funded by United Way donors and a generous community investment grant from Bankwestop. The eleven graduates and their respective organizations are:

- Angela Brunell, [Charlestown Land Trust](#)
- Deborah Callahan, [West Broadway Neighborhood Association](#)
- Caroline Gangi, [The Village Common of Rhode Island](#)
- Jonathan Goodman, [Student Clinic for Immigrant Justice](#)
- Bernard Georges, [New Bridges for Habitat Success](#)
- Raissa Hanftle, [Girls on the Run Rhode Island](#)
- Paula Hudson, [Better Lives Rhode Island](#)
- Amanda Parker, [The Burne Fund](#)
- Darrelle Salkeyary, [Warren Center for the Arts](#)
- Christopher Sarah-Rabondo, [Direct Action for Rights and Equality \(DARE\)](#)

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