American Heart Association.

CONNECTICUT

COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT



2025 - 2026

A LETTER FROM CONNECTICUT BOARD CHAIR

Dear Friends,

At the American Heart Association, every milestone is made possible by the dedication of volunteers, donors, and advocates who share our vision of a world of longer, healthier lives. Over the past year, we advanced that vision across Connecticut through innovative programs, strategic investments and community partnerships that are improving health and strengthening communities.

A highlight of the past year was receiving a transformational grant from the Cigna Foundation to launch our *Equity in Heart* initiative in Greater Hartford. This critical investment will help reduce barriers to care and improve access to high-quality, culturally relevant services for those most affected by cardiovascular health disparities.

We also recognized an exciting milestone for our Hands-Only CPR Mobile Kiosk, sponsored by Hartford HealthCare. Since launching, the interactive kiosk has reached more than 10,000 visitors across Connecticut, teaching community members how to perform Hands-Only CPR. Through our Nation of Lifesavers movement, we are equipping more people with the confidence and skills to act in a cardiac emergency, helping save lives when seconds matter most.

Another meaningful example of our impact is our collaboration with Waterbury Youth Services, which recently implemented a Cardiac Emergency Response Plan to help safeguard the more than 1,000 youth and families it serves each month. By equipping organizations with the tools and training needed to respond to cardiac emergencies, we are helping create safer environments and strengthening community preparedness across Connecticut.

Thank you to our dedicated volunteers, campaign leaders, Executive Leadership Teams, board members, staff and generous supporters for your continued partnership and investment in a healthier future. Together, we are making meaningful changes, improving health outcomes, and creating a lasting impact for individuals and families in Connecticut.

With Heart,



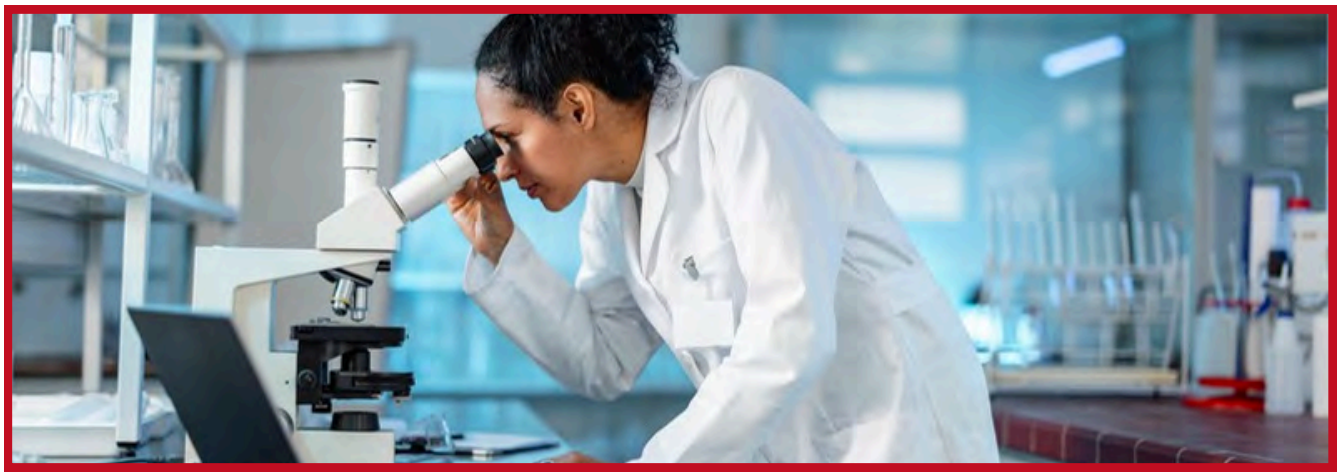
Francine LoRusso, M.H.A., RN, CCRN, CENP
Senior Vice President Heart and Vascular Services,
Medicine Services, Yale New Haven Health
American Heart Association
Connecticut Board Chair

ON THE COVER:
Analia Sinasis receives a Heart Saver Award at the 2025 New Haven Heart Walk for performing CPR on her father, Alex.

CREATING IMPACT



SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH



Funding research is a cornerstone of the American Heart Association's lifesaving mission. It is a pillar upon which the organization was founded and a key to our future. The Association funds many types of research, from basic science to emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and machine learning.

The research we fund through the generosity of our donors is helping more people survive heart disease and stroke. We've built one of the largest and most trusted research programs in the nation, funding more than $6.1 billion in heart disease and stroke research over the years.

THE HEART ASSOCIATION HAS INVESTED

$6.1BILLION

in research since 1949, second only to the U.S. government.



HEART ASSOCIATION

FUNDED

has resulted in discoveries that have saved lives in every community in the United States.



Research grants are currently funded in virtually every state in the U.S., including Connecticut. **Yale University, The Jackson Laboratory for Genomic Medicine, and the University of Connecticut** are the current recipients of **52 research grants totaling $11,700,164.**

COMMUNITY IMPACT

Building on over 100 years of trusted leadership in cardiovascular and brain health.



By 2028 the American Heart Association will drive breakthroughs and implement proven solutions in science, policy and care for healthier people and communities.

When we work in our communities, we meet people where they live, immediately making a positive impact on their overall health.



The greatest discoveries in health must reach people where they are.

CPR AWARENESS

Every year, 350,000 out-of-hospital cardiac arrests happen, and survival depends on bystanders stepping in and initiating the chain of survival. Since women, African Americans and Hispanics are least likely to receive bystander CPR in Connecticut, we are addressing this health issue by partnering throughout the state.





Across Connecticut, we are building safer, more prepared communities by expanding CPR education, advancing public policy and improving emergency response readiness. From Heart Safe communities and school-based response planning to AED access and Hands-Only CPR training, our work empowers more people to save lives when every second counts.

Across 100 Hands-Only CPR experiences statewide, more than 1,000 new lifesavers were equipped with the skills needed to respond during a cardiac emergency.



CREATING A NATION OF LIFESAVERS

Together, the American Heart Association and Hartford HealthCare are helping Connecticut communities build lifesaving CPR skills while raising awareness about the prevention and early detection of heart disease and stroke.





At the center of this effort is New England's first Hands-Only CPR Mobile Kiosk in Connecticut bringing interactive learning directly into communities. Each kiosk engagement helps another person gain the confidence and skills to respond in a cardiac emergency, creating a growing network of prepared bystanders ready to take action when every second counts.

By empowering more individuals to save lives, we are building a future where more people survive cardiac emergencies.

OVER 10,000 VISITORS

Thanks to Hartford HealthCare's generosity, the Hands-Only CPR Mobile Kiosk has traveled throughout Connecticut, sharing critical resources to more than 10,000 visitors and educating more than 6,000 individuals in Hands-Only CPR bringing lifesaving skills directly to communities.

"EVERY SECOND MATTERS WHEN SOMEONE IS EXPERIENCING CARDIAC ARREST AND KNOWING HOW TO PERFORM CPR CAN BE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH."

— NANCY BROWN
Chief Executive Officer,
American Heart Association



HEALTH FACTOR CONTROL
BLOOD PRESSURE

High blood pressure is often called the "silent killer" because it typically has no warning signs but can significantly increase the risk of heart disease and stroke. Working with organizations to provide community access, we are improving hypertension outcomes by providing blood pressure stations with self-measurement, education and referral to clinical care.

MARTHA JUDD HEALTH & WELLNESS KIOSK

In collaboration with the Yale New Haven Health Heart and Vascular Center, we brought a new wellness resource to the greater Bridgeport community.

The East End Market serves as a trusted neighborhood hub founded to address food insecurity, improve access to healthy living resources and strengthen community wellness in Bridgeport's East End.

In May 2026, the Martha Judd Health & Wellness Kiosk officially opened at the East End NRZ Market & Café — offering easy access to:

- **A self-service blood pressure station**
- **An iPad with digital resources**
- **Handouts in English, Spanish and Creole**



The Place for CommUNITY, New London



Keefe Community Center, Hamden





Thames Valley Council for Community Action, Norwich

HEALTH FACTOR CONTROL
MATERNAL HEALTH

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of maternal death in the United States. The unique risks that women face during pregnancy can have lasting effects on their long-term heart health.

GROWING THE DOULA WORKFORCE

Thanks to support from the **Connecticut Community Foundation**, the American Heart Association presented **25 New Mom Kits** to the #Day43 Doula Academy.

Each kit contains a blood pressure cuff validated for pregnancy, an infant CPR training kit, informational materials on heart health and how to access additional resources.



CONNECTICUT COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Thanks to support from the Connecticut Community Foundation Margaret M. Hallden Fund, we were able to provide vital resources and support to help address maternal health disparities in the Greater Waterbury community.

- 400 Infant CPR kits
- 100 Pregnancy-Validated Blood Pressure Devices
- 3 presentations to doulas and future nurses
- Junior billboards featuring educational messaging in English and Spanish, located in Bristol, Meriden and Waterbury





HEALTH FACTOR CONTROL
EQUITY IN HEART HEALTH

Cardiovascular Kidney Metabolic Health Initiative

The American Heart Association in Connecticut is one of 15 markets in the nation that launched a person-centered, four-year Cardiovascular Kidney Metabolic Health Initiative. The goal of this initiative is to impact health systems, healthcare professionals, and patients and their caregivers across Connecticut.

Lp(a) Community Health Center Discovery Project

This funded initiative focuses on improving Lp(a) screening and care by evaluating practice patterns for patients with elevated Lp(a), developing national testing models, and expanding provider screening at Fair Haven CHC and Southwest CHC.



Rural at Heart Initiative

Over the past two years, the Rural at Heart initiative has focused on improving hypertension and diabetes prevention, screening and management across 10 Greater Hartford ZIP codes. The effort brings together a network of 25 health care sites and 10 community-based organizations to increase access to care, strengthen care coordination and address cardiovascular health needs within the community.

Women's Heart Valve Disease

This funded initiative, in partnership with the Hispanic Health Council and the Connecticut State Conference NAACP, raised health awareness among Black and Hispanic women through community outreach and education. The program promoted preventive care, encouraged health screenings, and helped address health disparities in underserved communities across the state.

HEALTH FACTOR CONTROL
EQUITY IN HEART HEALTH

"EQUITY IN HEART HEALTH" FROM THE CIGNA GROUP FOUNDATION

The American Heart Association received a **$250,000 grant from The Cigna Group Health Equity Impact Fund** to strengthen community-based programs addressing health disparities in Greater Hartford.

Focused on hypertension and diabetes prevention and management, **the initiative serves residents in 10 Greater Hartford zip codes through a collaborative network of 25 health care sites and 10 community-based organizations**. The funding supports efforts to expand access to preventive care, address barriers to health and improve outcomes in communities disproportionately affected by chronic disease.

By leveraging both clinical and community partnerships, **the initiative aims to advance equitable health** and create sustainable improvements in cardiovascular health.





"This grant enhances our ability to advance equitable health outcomes in the communities we serve."
— Lynette Coleman, vice president, community impact

HEALTH FACTOR CONTROL
NUTRITION ACCESS & TOBACCO CESSATION

EXPANDING ACCESS AND PREVENTION SUPPORT

We are improving nutrition security and reducing tobacco use by strengthening community resources, expanding access to healthy food, and connecting individuals to critical support services.

Access to nutritious food and community resources plays a critical role in overall health and well-being. By working alongside community organizations and supporters across Connecticut, we are helping bridge gaps in access, strengthen community support systems and connect people with programs and services that can improve quality of life and health outcomes.





We also advance tobacco screening and cessation referrals in health care and community settings, while advocating for policies and public funding that support universal school meals, SNAP and WIC access, and effective cessation services.

PUBLIC POLICY AND AGENDA

We advocate for public policies at the federal, state and local levels that support our mission to be a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives. By advocating for public policies that build healthier communities, we can all make a difference in people's lives.

Public policy is one of the most powerful ways to create healthier communities and save lives. These are some of the key legislative issues the American Heart Association focused on in Connecticut:

2025-2026 LEGISLATIVE REVIEW

$12M investment in tobacco control including education, prevention, cessation

$12M for universal school breakfast to provide every student a free breakfast

Up to $3.5M to help schools implement their cardiac emergency action plans

Passed the Student-Athlete Cardiac Screening bill

Thank you to the advocates who championed change and advanced our mission across Connecticut. Whether you met with elected officials, shared our message on social media or took action through You're the Cure (now Heart Powered), your voice helped drive policy solutions, strengthen communities and create healthier lives for people throughout the state.



Association Government Relations Director Jim Williams testifies at a school meals hearing in 2026

KIDS HEART CHALLENGE/ AMERICAN HEART CHALLENGE

THE NEXT GENERATION

The Kids Heart Challenge is a fun and exciting initiative where students in elementary schools learn how to keep their hearts and brains healthy, while raising funds to help kids with special hearts.

By completing Finn's Mission, they also learn the lifesaving skill of Hands-Only CPR and how to recognize stroke.

319

schools registered to participate in 2026 representing a total enrollment of over 124,644 students.

1,618

students and educators completed Finn's Mission by learning Hands-Only CPR and warning signs of stroke and heart attack.

10,362+

students were reached with heart-healthy messages.

Congratulations to the TOP SCHOOL in Connecticut:
Jerome Harris Elementary School, Branford



Brent Ranssey, physical education teacher, Jerome Harris Elementary School

COMMUNITY EVENTS



NEW HAVEN GO RED FOR WOMEN

FEBRUARY 19, 2026 | THE WOODWINDS, BRANFORD

The 10th Anniversary Celebration of the Greater New Haven Go Red for Women Reception was held on Thursday, February 19, at The Woodwinds in Branford. The evening celebrated resilience, community and the ongoing fight against heart disease in women led by Go Red Co-Chairs Nicole DeMaio and Meghana Rao Brito, M.D.





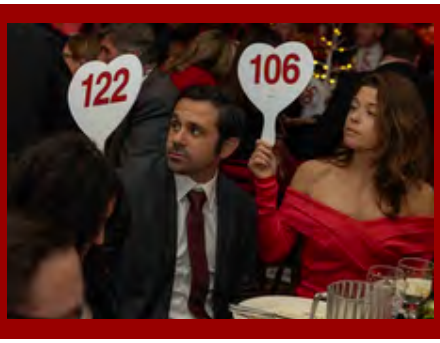
(from left) Nicole DeMaio, Leslie Churchwell, M.D., Francine LoRusso, Megana Rao Brito, M.D.

Hosted by WTNH News 8's Lisa Carberg, the evening brought together supporters for the largest event to date. The night featured a VIP cocktail reception, live auction, dinner and inspiring program. Guests heard a powerful survivor story from Devaunshi, whose heart health journey reinforced the importance of self-advocacy and seeking timely care.

The event also honored Francine LoRusso and Leslie Douglas-Churchwell, M.D., with the Legacy Leader Award for their outstanding commitment to advancing the Go Red for Women movement in Greater New Haven. The celebration concluded with the Party with a Purpose After-Party, featuring live music, dancing and a celebration of the year's impact on women's heart health.







HARTFORD GO RED FOR WOMEN

MARCH 19, 2026 | CONNECTICUT CONVENTION CENTER, HARTFORD



Greater Hartford's Go Red for Women Luncheon united supporters in a shared commitment to advance women's heart health celebrating connection, community and women's heart health.

Centered on the call to action, "Red Means Go," the event featured inspiring speakers, a vibrant Festival of Red with music, self-care stations and attainable ways you can "go" and lead a healthier life.

Nearly 400 attendees gathered for this year's Go Red for Women Luncheon, hosted by NBC Connecticut's Taylor Regan.

The event featured heartfelt remarks from Go Red Chair Caroline Wilke of CVS Health, a powerful survivor story from Linda Heidorn, with encouragement from her friend Maggie, led her to seek critical medical care and an inspiring keynote from Olympic champion and WNBA legend Tina Charles.

Together, these voices reinforced a resonant theme: when women support, educate and advocate for one another, they can help change the future of women's heart health and save lives.



Go Red Chair Caroline Wilke



WNBA legend Tina Charles



Linda Heidorn with friend, Maggie



NEW HAVEN STEM GOES RED

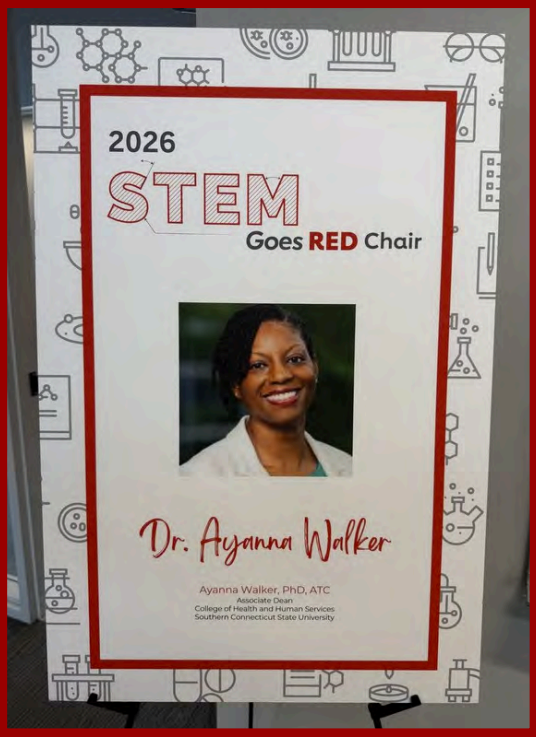
MARCH 7, 2026 | SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY, NEW HAVEN

Curiosity, discovery and opportunity took center stage at Southern Connecticut State University's annual STEM Goes Red event, hosted by the College of Health and Human Services.

Chaired by Ayana Walker, Ph.D., associate dean, College of Health and Human Services, the event welcomed 80 students for an immersive day of learning designed to spark interest in STEM-related careers.

From cardiology and nursing to radiology, biotechnology and exercise science, students explored numerous health care-focused professions through engaging breakout sessions and hands-on activities.

The experience offered participants a firsthand look at the many ways STEM disciplines contribute to improving lives and advancing health care.







HARTFORD STEM GOES RED

APRIL 10, 2026 | UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD, HARTFORD





The Hartford STEM Goes Red event was led by Chair Katy Carrillo of Stanley Black & Decker. For a second year it was hosted at the University of Hartford with enthusiastic collaboration from three of its colleges: the College of Arts & Sciences, the College of Education, Nursing and Health Professions, and the College of Engineering, Technology and Architecture.

More than 145 students from across Greater Hartford registered to attend, each selecting personalized learning tracks tailored to their interests. These immersive, hands-on sessions connected students with real-world applications of STEM—from genetics and DNA and cardiovascular physiology to technology in financial services and AI heart health. Every experience was designed to spark curiosity, build confidence and illuminate career pathways.

A powerful Hands-Only CPR demonstration united all participants, equipping them with a life-saving skill and reinforcing the vital link between science, health and community impact.





2026 WOMEN OF IMPACT

Each year, a select group of individuals are nominated to be a part of Woman of Impact because of their passion and drive to make a difference. Over a nine-week campaign, the changemakers are inspired to take action for their heart health and the health of the women they know and love.

In Hartford, Woman of Impact nominees including Shari Ann Madho, Jennifer Berry and Trish Chase who led heartfelt grassroots campaigns to champion women's heart health. Jennifer, managing director, Evernorth Health Services (Cigna) & Small Business and Trish, director of cardiology, APP Services, Hartford Hospital and Shari Ann Madho, partner, Legal Advocates LLC each brought unique passion and leadership to the cause.

Women of Impact Collectively raised over **$150,000**



2025-2026 WOMEN OF IMPACT CONNECTICUT NOMINEES

Woman of Impact goes far beyond fundraising. Nominees have inspired their communities to take heart health seriously and to champion the mission of the American Heart Association. We celebrate their leadership and commitment to creating a healthier future for all women.

The Greater New Haven Go Red for Women Campaign proudly recognized Nicole Batista, wellness and engagement manager, FCP, Maria Marcinek, office manager, AEPM, International LLC and Kathy Tucker, director of nursing, City of New Haven, as 2026 Woman of Impact Nominees. Through their dedication, passion and advocacy for women's heart health, Nicole, Maria and Kathy supported the lifesaving research, education and awareness efforts.

CONGRATULATIONS!



Earning the recognition as the "Woman of Impact" in Connecticut, Jennifer Berry joined an elite group of the "Centennial Club."

GREATER HARTFORD HEART WALK

SEPTEMBER 6, 2025 | RIVERFRONT PARK, HARTFORD

More than 500 walkers, survivors, volunteers and supporters attended the Greater Hartford Heart Walk at Riverfront Park. It was a day with purpose, community and heart.





Heart Walk Chair Adam Steinberg, D.O., M.B.A., FACS, FACOG, president, Hartford HealthCare Greater Manchester Region, led organizational efforts in Greater Hartford to raise awareness of heart disease and stroke while highlighting efforts to improve lives and communities.
Walkers were inspired by Shellaine Rose, while downtown Hartford came alive with a shared commitment to longer, healthier lives.

Funds raised support the American Heart Association's work in research, education, CPR education and equitable health across Connecticut.





EASTERN CONNECTICUT HEART WALK

OCTOBER 5, 2025 | UCONN AVERY POINT

It was a beautiful day at UConn Avery Point for the 2025 Eastern Connecticut Heart Walk celebrating the work of the past year and the impact made in Eastern Connecticut!

With the sparkling waters of the Sound as the backdrop, hundreds of walkers, supporters, volunteers, survivors and spirited teams came together on a gorgeous Sunday to champion heart health and raise critical funds for research and education to benefit Connecticut communities.

Leading the charge was event Chair Richard Lisitano, president, Lawrence + Memorial and Westerly hospital, and executive vice president, Yale New Haven Health, who helped rally over 500 passionate participants. The day kicked off with a powerful moment as Tia Emard, a local survivor, shared her inspiring story, reminding us all why we walk, why we care and why this mission matters.









GREATER NEW HAVEN HEART WALK

OCTOBER 18, 2025 | HUBBARD PARK, MERIDEN

The community came together in a meaningful way as the New Haven Heart Walk moved to the fall. Held at Hubbard Park in Meriden, the event was led by Honorary Chair Garrett Sheehan, president & CEO, Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce and united families, volunteers and supporters to raise critical funds and awareness in the fight against cardiovascular disease.

The day was filled with inspiration, connection and opportunities to learn lifesaving skills. Yale New Haven Health provided Hands-Only CPR demonstrations, empowering participants with the confidence to act in a cardiac emergency.
One of the most meaningful moments of the event was hearing from survivor Alex Sinaisi, a North Haven police officer who suffered sudden cardiac arrest. His life was saved thanks to the quick actions of his nine-year-old daughter, Analia, who immediately called 911 and began CPR. Their story served as a moving reminder of the importance of CPR education and the profound impact one person can have in saving a life.



(from left) Board Chair Francine LoRusso is joined by Heart Association Executive Director Adria Giordano, Analia and Alex Sinasis and Heart Walk Director Chelsea DeGroat at the 2026 New Haven Heart Walk



Garrett Sheehan, honorary chair



Turning bystanders into lifesavers with Hands-Only CPR

DONOR RECOGNITION

The Cor Vitae Society—Latin for heart of life—is the annual philanthropic giving society of the American Heart Association. The collective impact our members making annual, lifetime and legacy gifts is truly incredible, and we could not be more grateful.

Rosanna & William Andrulat
Thomas Barnes
Jennifer Berry
Maureen Boyle
Elisabeth Breslav
Joe Brito
Meghana Rao Brito, M.D.
Katy Carrillo
John C. Foley
Lou Gianquinto
Joost Gieskes
Faisal Hasan, M.D.
Maryann Kelly
Rich Lisitano
Francine & Robert LoRusso
James Mahoney
Megan Morgan
Patricia Pac
Daniel Prior
Janine Sadoski
Haley Sofiane
Pamela Sutton-Wallace
Christopher Swift
Dawn C. Tyler
Eric Velazquez, M.D. & Maureen Velazquez
Wheatley Wentzell
Caroline Wilke

The Society celebrates individual annual members making yearly gifts of $5,000 or more and Paul Dudley White Legacy Society members who have committed to a future of heart health for all by leaving a gift in their wills or estate plans.

Anonymous
Sharon Bean
Maureen Patricia Boyle
Steve and Leesa Heath
Vincent and Maria Howe
Lisa Marie Jones
Tracey Anne Jones
Donald Lockyer
Lawrence Marien
Dorothy Millen
James Sanquedolce
Ellen O'Connor Shugart
Susan Weimann

Our members support scientific advances, community health education programs, and advocacy and outreach efforts to ensure longer, healthier lives for people everywhere. Thank you to our Connecticut members for your generous support and for being a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives.

DONOR RECOGNITION

Circle of Red©

Circle of Red is Go Red for Women's annual giving society, made up of passionate individuals who are in the fight against heart disease and stroke in women to win. Circle of Red members are leaders in their communities and families.

This year, our Connecticut Circle of Red members enjoyed several heartfelt events, gathering together in support of the Society's mission. Thank you to our Circle members for being champions and saving lives!

Jennifer Berry
Alyssa Blume
Maureen Boyle
Meghana Rao Brito, M.D.
Katy Carrillo
Jocelyn DeMaio
Deborah Denno *
Elizabeth DeVito
Leslie Douglas-Churchwell, M.D.
Jennifer Gerasimov
Adria Giordano
Pat Johnson
Gale Kosyla
Francine LoRusso
Gerri Lyons-Bell
Maria Marcinek
Mena Mills
Claudia Norman
Joyce Oen-Hsaio, M.D.*
Gina Panza
Stephanie Saucier
Laura Schuntermann
Haley Sofiane
Lissa Sugeng
Pamela Sutton-Wallace
Richard Taikowski
Laura Terranova
Ayanna Walker
Wheatley Wentzell
Caroline Wilke
Deremius Williams
Stuart Zarich, M.D.

*Circle of Red Co-Chairs







Go Red for Women is more than a movement. It's a call to action.

IN GOOD COMPANY

It is with heartfelt gratitude that we thank these companies and organizations for their ongoing support, driving the American Heart Association to be a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives.

CORPORATE/FOUNDATION SUPPORTERS

Live Fierce. Be Relentless. Sponsor

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Heart and Vascular Center

Live Fierce. Take Action. Sponsor

Hartford HealthCare

Equitable Health Funders

THE CIGNA GROUP FOUNDATION

Connecticut Community Foundation Timeless Impact
Margaret M. Hallden Fund

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UCONN Foundation
Yale New Haven Health Heart and Vascular Center
Yale School of Medicine
YASH Technologies Inc.

IN GOOD COMPANY

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Mr and Mrs. Prisco Panza
New Britain Art Museum
Nomad
Olio
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SubherbanLivin
Talcott Mountain Music Festival
(Hartford Symphony)
The Bushnell Theater
The Foundry
Theatre Works Hartford
Total Wines & More
Travelers Championship
Emilie Willoughby
UConn Men's Basketball
Yale Reparatory Theater

IN GOOD COMPANY

It is with heartfelt gratitude that we thank these companies, organizations and individuals for their ongoing support, driving the American Heart Association to be a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives.

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Blasius Motors
CBIA
CDW
CohnReznick
Conning
ForeSullo Foundation
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Hello Heart
Key Bank
Mintz + Hoke
Munger Construction Co.
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West Haven Pharmacy
Women's Business Development Council

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CVS Health



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CareCentrix



Shai Upadhyay. M.D.
Children's Health Center
UHealth Jackson Medical Center

Every day, we see the power of our mission in action. From our cities and suburbs to our rural communities, we are working alongside dedicated supporters to improve health, advance equity and create a stronger, healthier future for all Connecticut residents.

Adria Giordano, Executive Director
American Heart Association, Connecticut

American Heart Association Connecticut

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