

IMPACT REPORT

Winter 2022



Thank you for your support of New England Conservatory. A vibrant and extended community of donors like you is critical to maintaining our commitment to excellence and ongoing innovation in music education. The support NEC receives also broadens our reach in sharing music with the world and improves access as we strive to engage new and diverse cohorts of artists.

Although charitable gifts elevate and advance the mission of an institution, their most significant impact is on *people*. Ultimately, their benefits can best be demonstrated through stories of opportunities made possible through generosity. I am pleased to share stories of philanthropic impact that I hope you will enjoy.

As I reflect upon my experience at NEC, I am moved by the many ways this community has worked together to address challenges both large and small, and I am excited to see how our future will unfold. That is why, even as we

commemorate the impact of recent giving, I invite you to continue to invest in NEC. Your ongoing support will be vital to us in addressing the opportunities and challenges yet to come.

Every year is a journey, one we take together to ensure that NEC students can develop their musicianship and artistry through world-class resources, transformative experiences, and exceptional mentorship. It is also a journey through which we aspire to share music with our community and the world. I remain ever grateful for your generous participation.

With thanks,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Andrea Kalyn'.

Andrea Kalyn
President



Helen Powell, longtime NEC friend and supporter, shared the story of her 2021 gift and her life in Boston with members of the NEC advancement staff, chronicled in this profile.

Reframing Challenges into Opportunities through Resilience: A Conversation with Helen Powell

Recently, longtime NEC supporter Helen Powell faced the daunting task of downsizing from her South End home to a retirement village outside of Boston. Powell loved her home in the vibrant neighborhood so close to the NEC campus, and over time she had filled it with photos, the family silver, an art collection, endless books and some gardening tools—accumulating much more than she had realized.

Though the transition to a new home wasn't easy, Powell chose to focus on the opportunity it

presented. She thought that future conservatory presidents, or even visiting artists, might benefit from living just a few blocks from campus with shops, cafes and parks nearby, and so she decided to donate her beloved property to the Conservatory. Today, it serves as the residence of NEC President Andrea Kalyn—and it will continue to be a resource to NEC for generations to come.

"Having NEC acquire my condo was a win for everyone," Powell said. "It transferred the pain of letting go into a gift that

benefits a school, faculty and students that I believe in."

Powell says that resilience has been one of the most important themes and qualities in her own experience. Intellectually curious and naturally inquisitive, she recalls moving from one academic discipline to another as she realized the interconnectedness of liberal arts and developed a world view that is inherently multidisciplinary.

Powell's grandmother modeled the importance of determination and focus, she says. Though

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she had only a high school education, her grandmother founded an innovative school in Louisville, Kentucky, that became the first in the state committed to preparing young women for college. The school, which has since gone co-ed, continues to have a positive impact on the world.

A keen observer and poet, Powell is a fan of the American poet Billy Collins who wrote “there’s mystery in the ordinary,” suggesting that there are lessons to be learned and entertaining observations to be reaped around us every day, if only one is willing to pay close attention. She lives by those words, casting an astute and discerning eye upon the world around her.

One of Powell’s least favorite directives from the past is being told what she cannot do. Her resilience is as much a response to that experience as it is to an inner drive to create, contribute and engage the world. While she has generously conveyed what in the fundraising domain is known as a “planned gift,” she has no intention of downsizing her ambition to live life to the fullest. Instead, she says, she awakens each day with a zest for new challenges. Her next project is to publish a collection of poems drawn from her unique take on the world, in keeping with Collins’ perceptive poetic framework, where each day is experienced as a learning adventure.



A CHIPS quartet performing in Jordan Hall. The next CHIPS concert is scheduled for May 15, 2022, at 12 p.m.

Cross-Pollination: A Key Strategy for Success in CHIPS

It’s been said that the most successful artists are those who work closely with and learn from other artists. This idea is central to the experience of New England Conservatory Preparatory School students and is central to an

innovative Prep program that has emerged in recent years: the Chamber Music Intensive Performance Seminar (CHIPS). Through it, select students aged 13 to 18 enhance their chamber music skills and performance

RECOGNIZING OUR DONORS

LEADERSHIP GIVERS

\$3.2 million

Contributed by NEC Leadership Circle (NECLC) donors last fiscal year.



While just 13 percent of overall donors, NECLC members give 87% of dollars reported by the NEC Fund.



87%

TOTAL
DOLLARS
RAISED

13%

Leadership Circle
Donors

THE TOURJÉE SOCIETY

Planned gifts create a lasting legacy that will inspire the future of music for generations to come. Almost 200 donors have joined the **Tourjée Society** and informed NEC of intended gifts from their estate plans, reflecting a desire to ensure that our students and faculty can continue to transform the world through music.

IMPACT

\$6,044,855

Given to NEC last fiscal year.

The majority of dollars (57 percent) were contributed to **The NEC Fund** and the **Spring Gala Scholarship Fund**. NEC donors support faculty, scholarships, classroom equipment, technology, and academic programs across the Conservatory.

For information on giving at NEC, please visit necmusic.edu/giving.

through immersion in a chamber music ensemble. To date, 60 students have participated.

Merry Peckham, chair of the Chamber Music Department at NEC and co-director of CHIPS, says cross-pollination—specifically the rich, dynamic interactions and exchanges of ideas across the NEC community—is one of the greatest assets CHIPS has in supporting the remarkable development of its pupils.

Students in the seminar, sometimes affectionately referred to as Chipsters, take masterclasses and hear performances from guest artists and mentors like Donald Weilerstein, Miriam Fried, Paul Katz, Paul Biss, and Kim Kashkashian. They also work extensively with the NEC college students in Peckham's Chamber Music Pedagogy course. The course, which Peckham developed with then-Provost Tom Novak, and CHIPS were launched in 2018 in partnership with Laura Blustein, chair of NEC Prep Chamber Music, and

Rebecca Bogers, dean of the Preparatory School; both are underwritten by the Morse family.

Over the years, college students have emerged as key leaders of CHIPS, offering management and instruction to the younger musicians. One of them is Grant Houston '20, '22 MM, whom Peckham characterizes as a superhero of sorts. "He has been helping to manage CHIPS for the past two or more years, is a brilliant teacher, amazing musician and marvelous person," she says.

Initially, Peckham wasn't sure the older NEC students would have time to engage with CHIPS due to their demanding schedules, but she was happy to find that they were willing to be involved. "For me this has been a major win that speaks volumes about the students as chamber musicians and the powerful impact of collaboration that comes with working with different personalities, groups and challenges."

CHIPS students study a selection of movements, which they perform at a capstone concert in Jordan Hall at the culmination of the program. Peckham says a Hayden movement is often mandatory, in part because he ostensibly originated the genre itself and also because performing Haydn successfully is a mark of great accomplishment for an ensemble—as Itzhak Perlman once told her, "There's no hidin' in Haydn." In addition, students often wish to perform Romantic-era works by Mendelssohn or Beethoven, or early 20th-century works, like those of Prokofiev or Shostakovich.

By leveraging strengths from the NEC breadth of institutional talent, CHIPS offers participants a remarkable learning experience. An important facet of the program is the 61-second review. College students and Chipsters alike offer each other reviews after each performance, learning from others' performances as well as their own. Listening to

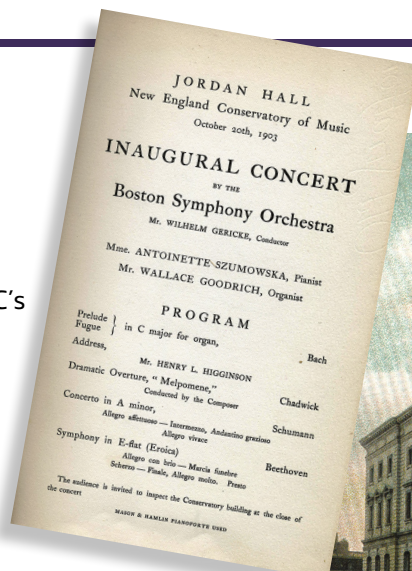
feedback and actively contemplating musical craft are vital elements of the learning process, but the ability to offer respectful critiques is just as important.

Peckham believes firmly that the NEC community itself creates the magic that fuels the success of CHIPS. In a way, she says, "we are the Hogwarts of conservatories. It's not just that students will have more time with teachers, or that the department is so strongly supported by NEC...it is that they will meet like-minded people who forge a community together that is supportive, dynamic and inspiring." Together, she says, these ingredients create a unique and truly special recipe for music education.

Gifts to The NEC Fund support the work of the NEC Preparatory School and programs like CHIPS, which is also funded through support of The Robert and Jane Morse Endowed Chamber Music Fund at NEC.

NEC History

The *Impact Report* is a winter publication in commemoration of NEC's founding. 2022 marks the 155th anniversary of the Conservatory, which opened its doors on February 18, 1867. Glimpses into NEC's past are featured here: an historic postcard capturing Jordan Hall as viewed from Huntington Avenue, and an announcement of the hall's inaugural concert in 1903.





Grant Houston is pictured with Michael Bukhman performing during a masterclass (left), and during a community performance with Trio Gaia (below).

Scholarship Funding is the Key to Growth



Scholarship funding is one of the greatest needs in the model of conservatory education. The experience of Grant Houston '20, '22 MM shows why.

Houston, who is pursuing a master of music degree in both Violin Performance and Chamber Music, is determined to engage fully in his education at NEC, and he is grateful for the scholarship support of NEC donors that makes that possible.

"One of the greatest benefits of my scholarship is the gift of time...time to develop a sense of purpose," he says. Free from the pressures of a job and worries about how to pay tuition, Houston says, he can develop and perfect his craft and take advantage of opportunities for musical experimentation, and in doing so gain clarity about his path forward as a musician.

Like all NEC students, Houston is immersed in a continuous cycle of study and frequent performance. He says, "With every class session you refine, practice and present, then return the following week to do the

same. Most college students have tests and evaluations a few times a year. At NEC, evaluations happen every week."

Houston has been using his time well, both as a soloist and as a member of Trio Gaia, NEC's graduate trio-in-residence in the Professional Piano Trio Program for 2021–2022. He and fellow NEC students Andrew Barnwell '20, piano, and Yi-Mei Templeman '22, cello, formed the group in 2018 as part of the Conservatory's Chamber Music program. Each member of the ensemble is awarded a full tuition scholarship plus a \$10,000 annual living stipend. Houston says that without the time and energy to invest in the ensemble, they would not have been able to move forward.

Participating in NEC's Community Performances & Partnerships program has inspired Houston to use the power of music to create human connections and reach a diverse range of audiences. He is a program coordinator for the NEC Preparatory School's Chamber Music Intensive Performance Seminar and a program

assistant for the Boston Bridge to Equity and Achievement in Music. Houston, who began studying the violin at age 7, said, "For me, sharing music isn't just about performing the repertoire for listeners—it's also about sharing the joy of creating that music with people young and old, and rediscovering the art through their eyes."

Scholarships have allowed Houston to remain at NEC for his master's degree, which has been pivotal to his career, he says. He has continued working with Trio Gaia and building upon the strong foundation he has created at the Conservatory, whose faculty coaching and resources are unparalleled. "As an undergraduate student, I wasn't ready to fully access the community and connections," he says, "but staying here has helped me unlock new and deeper opportunities."

Houston studies violin with Donald Weilerstein. He is the recipient of the Luise Vosgerchian Memorial Scholarship and a scholarship made possible by the Gene Davidson Dahmen Scholarship Fund.