

Aurora Foundation 2018 Breakfast Honorees



Susan Rottner, Woman Philanthropist of the Year – Susan retired in 2008 as President of Bank of America in Connecticut. In addition to her role as President, her 35-year career at the bank included work in portfolio management, branch banking, corporate communications and human resources. A longstanding community philanthropist, Susan has devoted her time, energy and resources to many organizations. As the past president of the Wadsworth Atheneum, she continues to serve on its Board of Trustees as an Honorary Trustee. Susan also served as the Board President of the Connecticut Women’s Hall of Fame, and as a Vice Chair and Executive Committee member of the Bushnell Center for Performing Arts, where she continues to serve as an

Honorary Trustee. Susan has also served on the Boards of the Greater Hartford YMCA, Hartford Hospital, the Aurora Women and Girls Foundation, and as a governor of the Greater Hartford Arts Council. She served as co-chair of the Mayor’s Commission to End Chronic Homelessness and was the 2006 Chair of the Greater Hartford Arts Council United Arts Campaign. In 2013, Susan received the National Conference for Community and Justice’s Human Relations Award.

Neha Jonnakota, Young Philanthropist of the Year– Neha, a junior at Glastonbury High School, is an active leader in her community and the Co-Founder of the *Power of Peace*, a non-profit organization aimed at ensuring brighter futures for local children in need. She spends her time raising awareness about children with nutritional and educational challenges in India and America. Through the *Power of Peace*, Neha has raised over \$100,000 for computer labs, solar panels, and steady water supply. In her community here in Hartford, Neha has volunteered at Foodshare and helps the Connecticut Children’s Medical Center with their annual Christmas Toy Drive. Neha is also an active member of her school’s Debate team and Model UN conference and helps other high school students learn more about the problems that are of concern in today’s world.



Elisabeth (Liz) Helmin, Emerging Young Philanthropist – Liz, a Senior at Ethel Walker School, is a longstanding Girl Scout and has participated in many community service activities including food drives, adopting low income families for the Christmas holiday, and preparing and sharing “Thinking of You” baskets with women in the community. With other scouts in her troop, Liz earned her Silver Award for service with the Lutz Children’s Museum in Manchester where they raised funds for and provided support services to animals in the museum’s care. This year, Liz completed her Gold Award project, “*My Words My Choice*,” a 9-week comprehensive program targeted at middle school-aged girls, underscoring the importance of being kind, considering other’s feelings and recognizing the impact that words have on others.

Olivia Rotter, Emerging Young Philanthropist – Olivia, a Senior at Hall High School, is passionate about serving her community. Back in 2017, Olivia started the first teen chapter of *Salaam Shalom Sisters*, a national organization that aims to end discrimination and bigotry by uniting Jewish and Muslim women. Olivia has coordinated a variety of events for her chapter including serving at soup kitchens, collecting food and toiletries for homeless shelters, and stocking items at food pantries. Additionally, she serves on the National Steering committee for *Salaam Shalom Sisters* which helps to initiate teen chapters nationwide. This summer, she will be working on designing a curriculum for new teen chapters as well as mentoring new leaders.



Grace Bergin, Emerging Young Philanthropist – Grace, a senior at Miss Porter’s School, has been volunteering her whole life. She helps at hospital holiday parties, makes blankets for homeless people, raises money to help end hunger and runs her own Grace’s Lemonade Stand. Inspired by the book *Alex and the Amazing Lemonade Stand*, Grace started her own stand as a second grader. Since 2009 she has raised over \$166,000 with donors from all 50 states and several countries. These funds support the Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders at Connecticut Children’s Medical Center. In addition to her Aurora honor, Grace was selected as the Connecticut High School Honoree for the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards and a

Malta House of Care Wonder Woman.