



NEWS RELEASE

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\$950,000 collaborative grant will empower University Settlement's College Passport and Families Thriving programs to expand mental health and wellness services to NYC students

Funded by the Solon E. Summerfield Foundation, The Carmel Hill Fund, and the Gray Foundation

New York, NY – University Settlement's College Passport and Families Thriving programs will receive a \$950,000 collaborative grant from the Solon E. Summerfield Foundation, The Carmel Hill Fund, and the Gray Foundation over three years, the nation's first settlement house announced today.

The funding will empower the programs to deepen their collaboration and make mental health and wellness services accessible to 700 youth across College Passport's five program sites, while embedding mental health professionals at East Side Community School and Susan S. McKinney Secondary School of the Arts through the 2025-26 school year. Services will include workshops for students and caregivers on mental health and well-being topics and direct connection to community-based therapy or social emotional supports.

The grant will also fund a dedicated clinician at University Settlement's mental health clinic, the Consultation Center, giving College Passport students access to individual therapy as they transition to and remain in college, as well as psychiatric support and medication management if indicated.

College Passport works to even the playing field to build college access and success for students, most of whom are either from families with low household income, or who would be the first in their families to go to college, at five partner high schools. Families Thriving offers community based, multi-tiered mental health and wellness supports, including healing-centered social emotional support, mental health services for youth and caregivers, and collaboration with educators.

In a collaborative effort to increase youth mental health service availability across New York City, the Solon E. Summerfield Foundation has partnered with the Gray Foundation and Carmel Hill Fund to grant \$5 million to increase service capacity at 8 organizations known for vital mental health supports to youth in need.

“We are thrilled to invest in University Settlement’s integrated services and programming – its programs are well positioned to provide effective, culturally competent, just-in-time support to young people on their journeys to college and careers. This grant will increase youth access to mental health services in New York City right now, while supporting coordination between mental health resources and organizations focused on postsecondary success and access,” said **Laurel Dumont**, *Senior Director, Grantmaking for the Solon E. Summerfield Foundation*.

“As high school and college students in our communities continue to grapple with an ongoing mental health crisis that is impacting BIPOC youth at disproportionate rates, we applaud the Summerfield Foundation, The Carmel Hill Fund, and the Gray Foundation for investing in the emotional well-being of New York City’s young people,” said **Barbara DiGangi**, *Director of Community Wellness Initiatives, University Settlement*. “We know that being well drives young people’s personal fulfillment and their success in academic, social, professional, and other endeavors. And in University Settlement’s programs, we see how powerful it can be to bring flexible, equitable mental health services – including ‘light touches’ that make a big difference, advocacy, and two-generational approaches – to youth where they are. This funding demonstrates an understanding that breaking through the stigma and barriers underlying the broader crisis will require going beyond traditional approaches, and ensures that our integrated programs can continue doing so in innovative ways.”

“We know that mental health is key to school success, but many NYC public schools are inadequately resourced to provide effective supports to students, particularly the first-generation, low-income students we partner with,” said **Kay Gordon**, *Director of College Passport*. “This grant will help us normalize mental health supports in schools and ensure that that our students are holistically supported as they take steps toward their future schooling and careers.”

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About University Settlement

University Settlement partners with 40,000 New Yorkers on the Lower East Side and in Brooklyn every year to build on their strengths as they achieve healthy, stable, and remarkable lives. For over 135 years, we've collaborated with our neighbors to pioneer highly effective programs that fight poverty and systemic inequality. Established in 1886 as the first Settlement House in the United States, we bring the values of that movement into the 21st century by meeting New Yorkers where they live, listening deeply to all perspectives, engaging with every individual holistically, and creating space for people to organize. Joining together with our neighbors to advocate for justice and equality, we help build community strength.

We work with New Yorkers of all ages. We infuse a commitment to civic engagement, equity, and communal action into each of our programs, which include early childhood education, mental health and wellness, benefits assistance and eviction prevention, adult literacy and education, healthy aging, community and recreation centers, performing and visual arts, and youth development.

Learn more at www.universitysettlement.org.