

FOUNDATION FOR LIVING

HOW FLINT'S WATER CRISIS DEMONSTRATES THE VALUE OF ENDOWED PHILANTHROPY

FOR THOSE WHO LIVE OR WORK IN FLINT, 2015
WILL BE REMEMBERED AS THE DAWN OF ONE
OF THE MOST DIFFICULT AND HEARTBREAKING
PERIODS IN OUR CITY'S HISTORY.

After more than a year of growing concern among residents and conflicting reports from government, the world learned in September 2015 that people in Flint were being exposed to lead in the city's drinking water. Research showed that the number of children with elevated levels of lead in their blood had more than doubled after the city switched from using the Detroit water system to using improperly treated water from the Flint River.

The news plunged Flint into a public health crisis that has tested the community's patience, broken its trust in government and sparked fear for the health of all residents — particularly children. It also cast a long shadow over the very real progress that was beginning to emerge in the city. More than a year later, such concerns continue to trouble the hearts and minds of residents and countless others who care about the community.

PHOTO CREDIT: MOTT FOUNDATION ARCHIVES

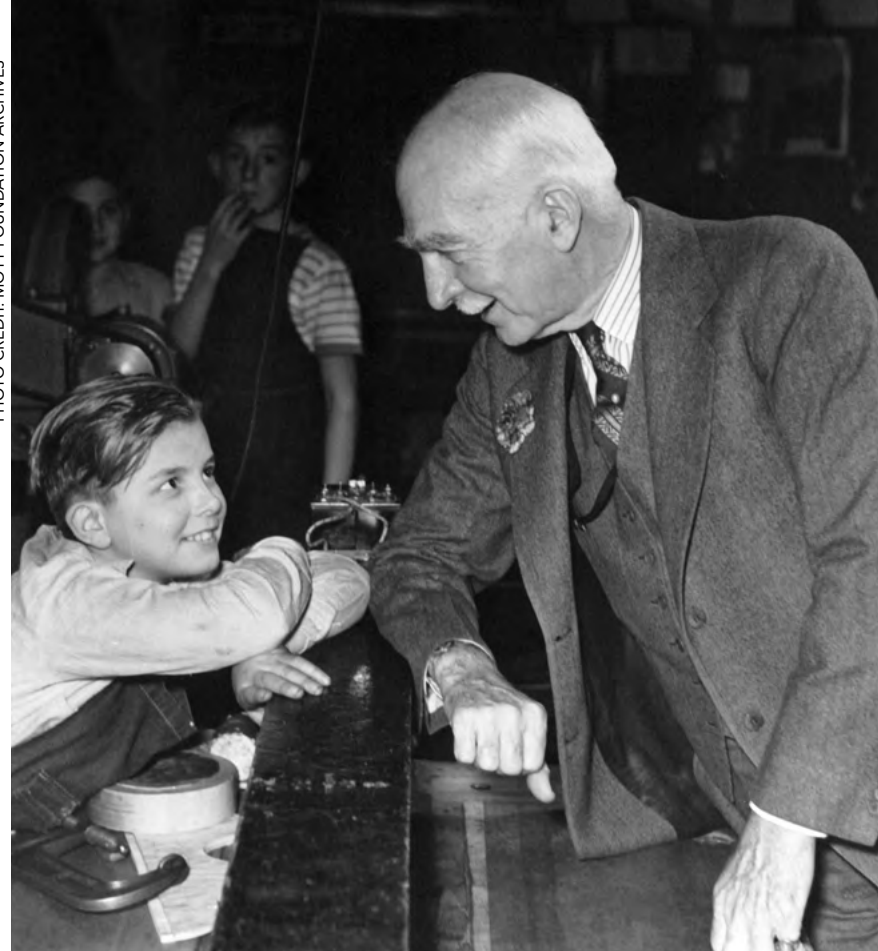


PHOTO CREDIT: CRISTINA WRIGHT





Photos (clockwise from top left): C.S. Mott chats with young Jack Grenier (circa 1940). From our earliest days of grantmaking in Flint, the Mott Foundation has maintained a special focus on the community's children.

A youngster at the University of Michigan-Flint's Early Childhood Education Center reaches for a colorful mobile made out of plastic water bottles. Children enrolled at the center created the mobile for Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha, the physician who drew national attention to Flint's water crisis and now directs the local Pediatric Public Health Initiative.

An AmeriCorps NCCC service member delivers bottled water to Flint residents.

And, yet, amid the pain, anger and fear, the people of Flint have continued to move forward in strikingly positive ways — from the steely determination of residents who refused to let their concerns be silenced, to the commitment of those engaged in the research and outreach activities that are essential to understanding the disaster and mitigating its impacts, to the dedication and resourcefulness of local organizations and institutions that are spearheading efforts to help the community.

As we mark the Mott Foundation's 90th anniversary in 2016, the disaster has intensified our commitment to our hometown. It has illustrated

PHOTO CREDIT: ADAM STOLTZMAN



Flint students practice mindfulness exercises to increase self-awareness, reduce stress and improve well-being.

the importance of partnerships in addressing major problems and highlighted the ability of philanthropy to respond in times of tragedy. Perhaps most important, it has underscored the value of endowed philanthropy and long-term grantmaking in helping communities deal with both day-to-day challenges and unexpected crises. Indeed, when we awarded \$5 million to support the Flint Child Health and Development Fund, it marked the 3 billionth dollar we had awarded in grant funding since our founding.

When Charles Stewart Mott created his foundation in 1926, Flint was experiencing a population explosion brought about by the burgeoning automotive industry. Seeing the challenges this rapid growth sparked, Mr. Mott focused many of the Foundation's initial grants on providing Flint residents with high-quality educational and recreational experiences, as well as services to safeguard the health of children — the kind of support we're still providing today. Indeed, we've seen some of our earliest grantmaking come full circle in the face of Flint's water crisis.

One example is our support for community education, which the Foundation helped to introduce in Flint in 1935. Providing academic and enrichment programs after the day's last school bell rang, the "lighted schoolhouse" approach changed the way residents engaged with their schools and helped spark an educational movement that spread throughout the country and around the world.

As part of a comprehensive master planning process, Flint residents in 2013 identified the creation of a new model of community schools as their top priority. When we set out to help reimagine how schools could once again become a center of community life in Flint, we had no idea

how quickly they would be called upon to do so. Today, the initiative is one of the community's best assets for responding to the water crisis.

With support from Mott, every public school in Flint now features a community school director, a community health worker and high-quality afterschool programming. Students receive research-based educational and enrichment opportunities, nutritional support, physical activity, mindfulness exercises and more. These are exactly the kinds of interventions that are needed to help mitigate the long-term effects of lead exposure.

In addition, the community health workers reach beyond the walls of the school to help students, their families and other local residents access a wide range of health and medical services. They also connect them to resources that can assist with basic needs related to food, clothing and housing.

Flint's many nonprofit organizations are working to meet those needs, and strengthening that sector was another early focus at Mott. Over the years, we've provided seed funding, general purposes support and other grants to bolster the city's nonprofit community. We've also helped to forge relationships, spark collaboration across the sector, and provide local nonprofits with assistance and resources designed to build their organizational capacity.

The resulting responsiveness, stamina and flexibility in the sector have been crucial in the face of Flint's water crisis. For example, Mott has made nearly \$23 million in grants since 2011 to support Flint's growing Health and Wellness District. Two anchor institutions in the district, the Michigan State University (MSU) College of Human Medicine and

PHOTO CREDIT: JIM WEST / ALAMY



A local resident visits Flint Fire Station #6, where volunteers were distributing water filters.

Hurley Children's Hospital, have demonstrated extraordinary leadership in responding to the crisis.

Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha directs the Pediatric Public Health Initiative, a collaboration between MSU and Hurley. It was her research that showed increased levels of lead in the blood of Flint children, and it is the initiative that now leads ongoing efforts to mitigate, diagnose, treat and track related health and behavioral impacts.



PHOTO CREDIT: DOUGLAS PIKE, PROVIDED COURTESY OF HURLEY MEDICAL CENTER

Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha directs the Pediatric Public Health Initiative, which seeks to mitigate, diagnose, treat and track health and behavioral impacts related to children's exposure to lead.

Many other Mott grantees also have responded to the crisis. The United Way of Genesee County coordinated the massive effort to distribute bottled water, filters and water testing kits throughout the city, while other grantees deployed resources to help residents get the nutritious foods, medical care and mental health services they needed. At the same time, the Community Foundation of Greater Flint began raising funds to help the community meet its challenges in the years and decades to come.

The fact that these institutions and programs were in a position to hit the ground running when the crisis broke speaks volumes about the significance of building and sustaining a vibrant nonprofit sector at the local level. Such organizations are often the first responders in times of need, and their ability to serve that vital role is rarely born overnight.

The water crisis also added weight to a key lesson we've learned through many years of working in Flint and elsewhere around the world: the importance of partnership. The magnitude of the crisis meant that no institution — and not even any single sector — could go it alone. We knew it would take many partners and allies, each playing to their individual strengths while collaborating with others, to respond to this complex challenge.

As soon as we learned about the increase in lead exposure among Flint's children, we reached out to the city and state to help them begin the process of bringing safe, clean water back to the community. We granted \$100,000 to provide Flint residents with free water filters and \$4 million to help the city reconnect to the Detroit water system within three weeks. We believe the latter is one of the most important grants we've made thus far to address the water crisis because it helped to prevent further harm to the people of Flint and further damage to the city's infrastructure.

We also began working with organizations on the ground in Flint, as well as other foundations from across the region and around the country, to gather and share information and ideas about how philanthropy could best help the community meet its needs. On May 11, 2016, we joined nine other funders in announcing a multiyear effort totaling up to \$125 million — including our own pledge of up to \$100 million over five years — to help Flint recover and rise from the water crisis. Those funds are helping to tackle such immediate and long-term concerns as health, education, community engagement and economic revitalization.

The charitable response to Flint's crisis has focused attention on an important question: what is the role of philanthropy vis-à-vis government in responding to a community in distress?

Over the years, Mott has sometimes made grants in Flint for services that typically would be considered the realm of government. In addition to helping the city reconnect to the Detroit water system, we also have provided support for public safety, local libraries and county parks. In each case, we recognized that the loss of services in a city already challenged by economic hardship would further diminish quality of life and undermine the community's ability to chart its own future.

That being said, we believe philanthropy cannot and should not be expected to replace public funding streams. There are two reasons for this. First, the most important function of government is to protect the safety and well-being of its citizens. That responsibility cannot be punted to any other sector. Second, foundations do not possess the resources that can substitute for public funding at any meaningful scale.

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Take, for example, the country's aging water infrastructure. If the 100 largest foundations in the United States chose to forgo all of the charitable purposes for which they were created and devote themselves solely to overhauling that infrastructure, our combined assets would be a mere fraction of the \$1 trillion the American Water Works Association estimates would be needed to address the nation's drinking water systems over 25 years.

Of course, there are many avenues by which philanthropy can work well with government, and Mott has a rich history of doing just that in our Flint Area grantmaking and across our other programs — Civil Society, Education and Environment. For example, our work in community education in Flint led us to support efforts to bring afterschool programs to scale nationwide. We helped expand the federal government's 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative from a small pilot project in 1998 to the largest afterschool grant program in U.S. history, currently serving 1.6 million children in more than 11,000 schools and community centers.

Our work also has demonstrated that philanthropy can help identify and test innovative solutions to pressing problems — solutions government may then embrace. For instance, our support in the late 1990s for the exploration of new approaches to urban land use policy fueled the development of the country's land bank system. Today, 120 land banks across the country are linking public and private efforts to stabilize and revitalize neighborhoods by preventing tax foreclosures, demolishing



PHOTO CREDIT: RICK SMITH

A learning guide works with participants in a YouthQuest summer program at Doyle-Ryder Community School in Flint.

abandoned houses, and bringing vacant and tax foreclosed properties back into productive use.

These examples reflect our belief that the relationship between foundations and government should be one in which philanthropic funding is used to drive innovation and to supplement — rather than supplant — government funding.

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Today, our work in Flint and around the world demonstrates the value of endowed philanthropy and grantmaking in perpetuity. By committing to the long haul, we and other foundations continue to support the growing and durable bodies of knowledge, resources and networks that are so essential to society's capacity to respond to the challenges we face today, as well as those that lay beyond the horizon.

Furthermore, by keeping an eye on the long view, philanthropy can help communities prevent current problems from becoming permanent wounds. The importance of that role is evidenced in Flint's water crisis — Mott would not be able to help our hometown recover and rise from the disaster if we had spent our way out of existence 50, 20 or even two years ago.

We began this Annual Message by noting that 2015 will be remembered as the start of one of the most trying periods in the history of our hometown. The challenges the community continues to

deal with on a daily basis, as well as those that may take decades to emerge, indicate that the journey ahead won't be easy.

As we also have pointed out, there is real optimism and gritty determination to be found in Flint. It's seen in those who have cultivated progress in a city marked by many as being down for the count. It's demonstrated by the people and organizations that have committed to helping the community prevail over a public health disaster. And it's evidenced by the encouraging stories found in a city that, even in times of crisis, is still "Flint Strong." We look forward to sharing new stories of action and progress from our hometown in the years to come.

In the next section of this report you'll find a few snapshots of our hometown grantmaking over the years. We also encourage you to visit our newly redesigned website at www.mott.org to learn more about work underway in the community, our response to the water crisis, and our approach to grantmaking in Flint and around the world. ●



A stylized, handwritten signature of William S. White in black ink.

William S. White
Chairman and CEO



A stylized, handwritten signature of Ridgway H. White in black ink.

Ridgway H. White
President