Catherine Maeve Gorey  
Community Fund of Darien



Catherine Maeve Gorey wants to be involved in giving for the rest of her life. The 16-year-old Junior at[Darien High School](http://www.darienps.org/page.cfm?p=503) in Darien, CT has been engaged in the [Youth Community Fund of Darien](http://www.communityfunddarien.org/Youth-Community-Fund.html) and the[Youth Philanthropy Connect Leadership Team](http://www.fcfox.org/ypc-story/ypc-leadership-team/) for the past year.

The Youth Community Fund of Darien’s goal is to expose local high school students to leadership, community service, and philanthropic opportunities. According to the Fund’s website, “These students pursue volunteering opportunities, research needs, review grant applications and award $5,000 in grant money to nonprofits.”

A single year on the Fund runs from the fall to the spring—from visiting and researching nonprofits during the fall and winter months, to deliberating in the spring. Before the group even starts talking about which organizations should receive grants, it determines what top three needs it wants to address in its grantmaking for the year.

Gorey feels passionate about many social justice issues, and there isn’t always room for all of them in the group’s focus point for that year. For example, she explained, helping immigrants in the community did not make the cut in Youth Fund’s, but other issues close to her did such as homelessness and early access to education.

[](http://www.fcfox.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/image001.jpg)Gorey’s mother, who serves as the President & COO of [New Canaan Community Foundation](http://www.newcanaancf.org/) and runs their youth philanthropy group, encouraged her daughter to join not just the Youth Fund in their home town of Darien, but also the YPC Leadership Team in the same year. Gorey is impressed with the broad perspective YPC has offered her in the field of giving. “I think it’s really interesting to see all of the different organizations and how youth are involved in all the aspects of their communities all over the country,” she said, “and how they all have these really interesting perspectives and new ideas about approaching philanthropy.”

After a year of philanthropic activities, Gorey can’t picture a future that doesn’t involve giving back: “I can see myself definitely going into a field where I help people,” she said, “whether or not that means getting involved in nonprofits. But I can definitely see that, even if it’s not a part of my profession, as something I want to be involved in for the rest of my life.”

And there’s no doubt she’s on her way to making that happen—for while contributing to the Youth Fund and YPC, studying as a full-time student, participating in a year-round club swimming team, and being an active girl scout, Gorey still manages to volunteer at various organizations in her community.

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