



MICHAEL • MANZELLA • FOUNDATION
EDUCATION • CHILDREN • CANCER RESEARCH • ARTS

MMF HOSTS A TAILGATE AT "THE GAME"



Every other year, The Game (aka Yale-Harvard) is played on Yale's home field, with MMF hosting a reception celebrating Michael's memory and the

friendships we have fostered. With COVID-19 hampering indoor gatherings last November, we moved our celebration outside for a fun and festive tailgate preceding The Game. Adding music and mirth to the outdoor setting were multiple generations of the *Society of Orpheus and Bacchus* (aka the "SOB's"), Michael's beloved *capella* group, delighting the crowd of alumni and friends.



MMF Board members Diana Loukedis Doherty, Frank and Joan Manzella, Casey Manzella and Frank Manzella tailgating at the Game, November 2021



Multiple generations of SOB's gathered to sing before heading into the Yale Bowl for the Game

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

As we complete our 28th year, it's refreshing say with great confidence: **WE'RE BACK!!** Back from pandemic disruptions. Back to in-person meetings and social gatherings. Back to our Fellows conducting their projects in-person, domestically and globally.

And we are simply delighted with this year's group of Fellows – each pushing our mission forward:

- **Education:** developing a *curriculum for orphanages* in Honduras and educating *low-income, special needs* children in the New Haven Public Schools
- **Children's Causes:** providing *refugee youth* with new hope and English-language skills as they flee repression and seek a better American life
- **Arts:** commissioning a *new musical* based on the Mexican artist Frida as well as sponsoring ground-breaking research on the power of *comedic instincts* and "laugh as revolution"

Speaking of *comedic instincts*, many of you remember Michael's love of a good *low-brow* joke. And now MMF sponsors *high-minded academic research* on the art of comedy itself.

The irony is simply delightful.

We are equally pleased with our long-standing grant-making relationships truly converting your generosity into concrete results:

- **Education** - supporting inner-city musical theater at *DreamYard Prep*
- **Cancer** – alleviating financial burdens so families can focus on care at *FOK*
- **Arts** – developing a new generation of musicians at *Back Country Jazz*

And last but not least, we were thrilled to return to "live action" at two events near and dear to us. The first was an outdoor tailgate reception at The Game in New Haven (see left) and the second was personally presenting the Manzella Award at Timothy Dwight's Commencement activities (see page 4).

In sum, we're back and better than ever after 28 years. While our "mid-20's" threw us a real curveball with the global pandemic, we have emerged wiser and more confident as we move towards the beginning of our fourth decade – yes, fourth!!

We could not have more conviction about the importance of our work and look forward to your continued support for our mission in education, cancer research, children's causes and the arts.

Sincerely,

Frank J. Manzella
Chairman

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MMF Fellows: \$21,000 to Five Young People Changing the World



Yakeleen Almazan

Education curriculum at COPPROME orphanage, Honduras.

Education, Children's Causes

Walking through the gates of COPPROME Orphanage completely changed me. I grew a personal connection to the children and our shared experience of familial incarceration, substance abuse and neglect. I realized the importance of love and compassion to provide advice, de-escalate stress and instill hope. I came away with even stronger conviction to become a human rights advocate for UNICEF.

Through MMF's sponsorship, I learned the special emphasis of family, education and the power of love.



Jasmine Oang

New Haven Public Schools Student Services

Education, Children's Causes

I toured eight schools in New Haven's public school system, learning that 3,000 were enrolled in special education, many from lower-income families. As a first-generation, low-income student, I know that finances and home situations impose hardships and interfere with a child's education. I worked with Supervisors of Psychology, Occupational Therapy and Social Work to create digital resource guides for relevant social programs and aid at the national and community levels.

I am so grateful to MMF for the opportunity to continue my work creating policies serving students from underrepresented backgrounds.



Carmen Lopez Villamil

Peer Mentor for refugee youth with the International Rescue Committee.

Education, Children's Causes

For over two decades, the International Rescue Committee's Newcomer Summer Youth Academy (NSYA) has helped acclimate and integrate refugee, asylum-seeking and migrant youth from around the world into New York City and its public schools. We worked with children from Central and South America as well as Senegal, Afghanistan and Ukraine. As a teaching assistant, I witnessed first-hand how students transformed from sliding away from English worksheets and refusing pencils to eagerly raising their hands and shrieking over one another to read paragraphs aloud in English.

NSYA has revolutionized my conception of kindness and the human capacity to communicate. I cannot describe the feeling of having a class of supportive kids who are excited to learn.



Lil Wenker

Shadowing a French clown and performers to inform a thesis on the role of the fool in history.

Performing Arts, Education

Returning to the clowning performance school in Etampes, France was a great, comedic adventure. The school boasted students from India to China to Mexico to Lithuania, with diverse ages as the vaccine allowed older actors to travel again. I conducted interviews with students and teachers across a far vaster demographic than ever before, witnessing comedic

sensibilities free from curricular structure and revealing unencumbered instincts. This accelerated my research and clarified my thesis topic: focusing on personal comedic instinct and its power; laughing and making others laugh as revolution.

I really have MMF to thank for everything this summer. It has completely connected me with the theatre community in Europe and has even created a clear path for post-grad life.



Grace Campos

New musical based on Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera's relationship

Performing Arts

Recording a concept album and new musical based on Frida Kahlo, one of Mexico's most important painters and folk artists, is an incredible undertaking. With MMF's help, I was able to travel to La Casa Azul, her home in Mexico City. I learned first-hand about her childhood, her Mexican-German-Jewish ancestry (similar to mine!), her relationship with Diego Rivera and how his love for Mexico drove the incorporation of many Mexican elements into her artwork. Feeling a unique connection to her story, I was even more inspired to write about her life in musical form.

I would never have had this experience without MMF's support and I'm incredibly excited to see where this ambitious musical project goes.

MMF Long Term Partners awarded \$5,000 each to further their mission

DreamYard Prep Musical Theater

(www.dreamyardprep.com)

MMF's assistance helps hundreds of inner-city students benefit from high-quality professional teaching artists in instrumental, musical theater and choral / vocal music. Our 2022 grant supported a study of Dominique Morisseau's play *Pipeline*, centered on the school-to-prison pipeline and its real-life impact on NYC youth. After studying and performing a character's monologue, each student led a communal discussion of the personal impact the experience had on them.



Friends of Karen

(www.friendsofkaren.org)

MMF continues to impact families with a child being treated for life-threatening diseases. As FOK Regional Director Leslie Bellissimo said, "Thanks to MMF, the family of 5-year old Rossy won't worry about paying this month's rent or putting food on the table. Because of you, they will focus on the most important thing - Rossy's leukemia treatment."

Back Country Jazz

(www.backcountryjazz.org)

Providing an additional 2-years of operating support, MMF is proud to fund free educational music programming and instruments for Bridgeport youth engaged in Summer Music Camp, After-School Music and mentorship from the highest quality professionals. As Founder Bernie Wallace notes, "I see first-hand what Bridgeport kids don't have and they desperately need more musical instruments. We are so grateful for MMF's support."



Youth participants in BackCountry Jazz perform in concert

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



For over 10 years, MMF has proudly witnessed Rachel Wilf-Townsend's impressive accomplishments. After receiving the Michael Manzella Award in 2011 and graduating from Yale Law in 2017, Rachel embarked on a career focused on public interest law, serving as a clerk for both Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor as well as then-US Appellate Judge Merrick Garland (currently Attorney General). She has also been a tireless advocate with non-profit organizations on matters including landlord/tenant services, immigration rights, child care and public benefits. Perhaps most importantly, she and her husband Danny also welcomed their first child, Charlie, in February 2022. We congratulate Rachel - and her growing family - on pursuing all that is important to MMF.



OUR MISSION



Michael Manzella
(1971 - 1993)

Michael Manzella, a gifted scholar, musician and athlete, succumbed to a two-year battle with cancer in 1993 at the age of 21. He left behind a legacy of music, love and inspirational courage. This Foundation was conceived to honor that legacy.

The Michael Manzella Foundation is a not-for-profit corporation dedicated to activities in education, children's causes, cancer research and the arts. We support those individuals and institutions that demonstrate the leadership and potential to make significant contributions in these areas. These goals are consistent with the struggles and achievements of Michael's life.

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Check out the MMF website at themichaelmanzellafoundation.com



Michael Manzella Award 2022

After two years of virtual graduation ceremonies we were able to present the Timothy Dwight College Michael Manzella Award for 2022 in person.

This year the award was presented by Joan and Frank Manzella to George Hua. Hua graduated as a music major and will be continuing his education in music.

Keep in Touch! To hear more about MMF events, please provide us with your e-mail address on the enclosed form.

If you wish to support MMF, you may send a tax-deductible donation to:

Michael Manzella Foundation
412 Woodbridge Road
Rockville Centre, New York 11570

You may also donate on-line at www.themichaelmanzellafoundation.com.
This option is available under the "About" tab. Thank you for your support.