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Manhattan Institute Announces Five Nonprofits to Receive \$25,000 Civil Society Awards

NEW YORK, NY — The [Manhattan Institute](#) is proud to announce five outstanding nonprofits and their leaders as recipients of its 2020 [Civil Society Awards](#). This year's winners were selected from nearly 200 nominations from 37 states and 107 cities around the country. Each organization will be honored with a \$25,000 prize at the annual Civil Society Awards event, which will be held virtually on October 29, 2020.

"This year's outstanding group of awardees reminds us how civil society initiatives can address such vexing problems as providing long-term support for foster children, bringing cultural resources to disadvantaged rural areas, learning the best ways to support and care for family members living with dementia, helping children of immigrants build confidence and expand their horizons through classical music, and even amid a pandemic, assisting the homebound, elderly, and immunocompromised," said [Howard Husock](#), director of Manhattan Institute's [Tocqueville Project](#). "Our 2020 winners have done all this and more."

As part of the institute's effort to reinvigorate public understanding of America's vibrant civil society, which plays an important role in strengthening our communities, the [Civil Society Awards](#) recognize nonprofit leaders who address social challenges and work toward a common purpose in their communities. These inspiring individuals and their organizations rely on philanthropy and volunteers—rather than government support—to empower the poor and disadvantaged, build caring relationships to support those in crisis, prepare the next generation to realize their full potential, restore and revitalize struggling neighborhoods, and much more.

2020 CIVIL SOCIETY AWARD WINNERS

[Carole Klingler, LIFE: A Dementia Friendly Foundation:](#)

Located in Lorain County, outside of Cleveland, Ohio, [LIFE: A Dementia Friendly Foundation](#) is a faith-based nonprofit that offers free, weekly programming for individuals living with dementia, and their caregivers, in a safe, stable, and familiar environment. While dementia presents a variety of family-care challenges and costs for those touched by the disease, LIFE provides life-changing resources—education, training, and engaging activities—that improve the quality of life of the person suffering from the disease and their family members. With the help of dozens of volunteers and a multitude of local businesses, health-care professionals, and community partners, LIFE has served more than 150 participants and their family members since 2016 with love and dignity, helping them care for each other and providing a much-needed network of support.

[Darryl "DMC" McDaniels and Sheila Jaffe, The Felix Organization:](#)

Founded by Rock ‘n’ Roll Hall of Famer Darryl “DMC” McDaniels and Emmy Award-winning casting director Sheila Jaffe, [The Felix Organization](#) provides inspiring opportunities and new experiences to enrich the lives of children growing up in the foster care system. Since 2006, the organization has grown to include five summer camps in the Los Angeles and New York areas and offers year-round programming to allow foster care youth the opportunity to pursue their goals, develop their talents, attend cultural and sporting events, and more. Through these life-changing experiences, The Felix Organization empowers youth to realize their full potential, grow in self-confidence, build healthy relationships, and make positive decisions. With the help of more than 100 volunteers, community partnerships, and generous philanthropic support, the organization has served more than 10,000 youth, providing stability and care for those whose lives are marked by trauma and uncertainty.

[Healy Chait, Liam Elkind, and Simone Policano, Invisible Hands:](#)

Invisible Hands is a New York City-based nonprofit founded in March 2020 as New York communities faced serious health and economic challenges resulting from the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. At the height of the pandemic, [Invisible Hands](#) amassed 10,000 healthy, neighborhood volunteers, and they continue to provide contactless grocery delivery to the most vulnerable, especially people at high risk for contracting a serious case of Covid-19. With a focus on mutual aid, the organization has bridged the gap between generations, brought neighbors together during a challenging time, and solved the dual problems of food insecurity and social isolation that were exacerbated by the pandemic. In just five months, Invisible Hands’ volunteers have completed thousands of deliveries to those in need—amounting to more than \$1 million in food, medicine, and other necessities. Recently, the group expanded to cities in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, providing not only critical supplies, but social connectedness and a sense of community.

[Ruth Ellen Jacobson, Tocando Music Project:](#)

The [Tocando Music Project](#) empowers children growing up in challenging social and economic conditions in and near El Paso, Texas, to transform their lives through music. Inspired by Venezuela’s “El Sistema,” an international youth orchestra movement, Tocando’s immersive music education provides its students, many of them children of first- and second-generation immigrants, with a strong sense of community and an opportunity to gain the tools, confidence, and motivation to succeed in life. With the help of strong community and philanthropic support, Tocando has touched the lives of nearly 300 students, helping them build valuable life skills—such as teamwork, leadership, and discipline—that pave the way for future academic and career achievements.

[Shel Neymark, Embudo Valley Library & Community Center:](#)

The [Embudo Valley Library & Community Center](#) is a nonprofit public library and the local hub for educational, cultural, and recreational resources in rural New Mexico’s Rio Arriba and Taos counties. With the help of more than 60 volunteers, the library offers a multitude of community events and critical services—including the only free, public computers and internet connection available in the area—to more than 900 local residents and 8,500 people in the broader region. The library also provides robust children’s programming, including an early literacy program, after-school enrichment and tutoring for K–6th grade students, and a STEM program that offers students 3D printing and robotics classes. Participants in the youth STEM program have shown significant gains in technology-related skills and confidence, which highlight how opportunities for local school children have increased due to library programming and assistance from its staff.

About the Civil Society Awards:

Based in New York City, the Manhattan Institute is a think tank whose mission is to develop and disseminate new ideas that foster greater economic choice and individual responsibility. For nearly 20 years, the institute has sought to support and advance America’s long tradition of civil society organizations and leaders who, with the help of volunteers and private philanthropy, address and prevent some of our nation’s most pressing public problems. Learn more about Manhattan Institute’s Tocqueville Project and Civil Society Awards program [here](#).

If you are interested in attending the Civil Society Awards virtual event on October 29, please contact civilsociety@manhattan-institute.org.

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