

Deblasio Family Foundation

2025

YEAR IN REVIEW

DFF Board of Trustees



JACK
DEBLASIO



SARAH
DEBLASIO



HEATHER
HOLMES DEBLASIO



JOHN
DEBLASIO

Dear friends and colleagues,

We hope this newsletter finds you well. It's been a busy and rewarding year so far for the **DeBlasio Family Foundation (DFF)**. Our trustees have been actively expanding their philanthropic work across a variety of areas, including local transit, environmental sustainability, civic engagement, veterans' support services, elder care, animal rescue, and the arts, and so much more.

We're grateful for your interest and support in helping us champion the following important and impactful organizations.

Wishing you a warm Holiday season ahead,

John, Heather, Sarah, Jack



THIS YEAR, **JACK** HAS PLEDGED SUPPORT FOR:



DEER VALLEY YMCA

A traditional summer camp nestled in the beautiful mountains of Western Pennsylvania, Deer Valley YMCA (<https://www.deervalleyymca.org>). This pledge specifically supports the introduction of a new composting system in the Camp mess hall, designed to successfully divert food waste from landfills. Jack emphasizes the environmental significance: "Diverting food waste from landfills is paramount, preventing its transformation into methane gas, which is toxic to our ozone layer. Instead, composting converts this waste into carbon dioxide, enriching our grass, gardens, and overall environment."

POGOH

Pittsburgh's Bikeshare Program (<https://pogoh.com>). This pledge was intended to serve as part of Jack's larger portfolio focused on local sustainability, offset Pittsburgh Regional Transit's budget shortfall, and generate fun and engaging events designed to strengthen the connection with the Pittsburgh community.



JACK DEBLASIO's philanthropic focus lends to creating pathways to secure the personal freedoms of the underrepresented and the voiceless — including animal rights, governmental transparency, and personal autonomy.



SARAH DEBLASIO'S PLEDGE



THIS YEAR, **SARAH** HAS PLEDGED SUPPORT FOR:



 We are so grateful to our CHALLENGER supporter of Artadia Tennis 2025, The DeBlasio Family Foundation. This event is a lively tennis tournament that raises funds for the Artadia Awards program, helping us to grant unrestricted funds to artists in eight cities.



Artadia has awarded over  \$6 million in unrestricted funds to  430 artists in 8 cities 



THE ARTADIA TENNIS TOURNAMENT

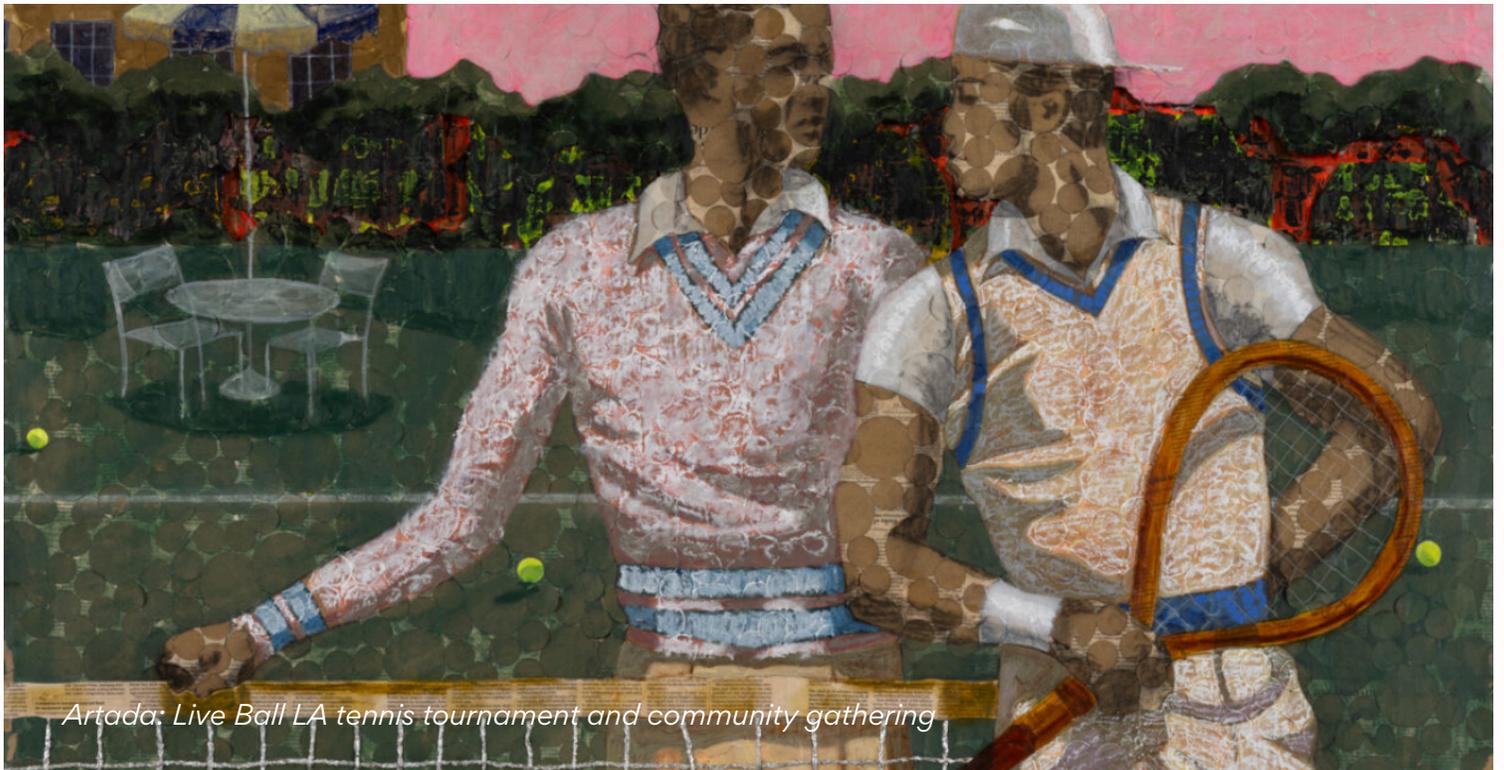
The Artadia Tennis Tournament successfully raising awareness and funds for Artadia's vital mission to elevate artists' careers at pivotal moments through recognition, grantmaking, community support, and advocacy. Artadia is a non-profit grantmaker and nationwide community of visual artists, curators, and patrons. We elevate the careers of artists at pivotal moments in their practice through a proven combination of recognition, grantmaking, community support, and advocacy. Artadia also provided unprecedented support in the form of unrestricted grants and

mentorship/crisis response to artists who were impacted by the recent LA fires!

Sarah's involvement underscores her expansive commitment to promoting awareness, access, and support for contemporary artists, while also championing institutional innovation that enhances engagement with museum experiences, history, and modern cultural influence.



SARAH DEBLASIO's philanthropic and leadership focus spans the Arts — including the promotion, access, and support of contemporary artists as well as the institutional innovation of access to the museum experience, history, and influence in modern culture.



Artada: Live Ball LA tennis tournament and community gathering

HEATHER DEBLASIO'S PLEDGE



THIS YEAR, **HEATHER** HAS PLEDGED SUPPORT FOR:



In 2025, Heather deepened two long-standing commitments and elevated a new focus area tied to a long-held personal passion:

- **Wild mustangs & humane stewardship** — advancing awareness and humane policy from roundup to refuge while honoring America’s living national heritage; Heather has adopted two formerly wild mustangs, Finley (Sand Wash Basin; known on the range as Oathbringer) and Hedy(Lost Creek).
 - **Sanctuary and soft landings** — supporting Banditas Wild Horse Promise and its lifetime-care model for gathered and older mustangs, alongside humane education and public awareness.
 - **With veterans:** backing Operation Wild Horse’s equine-assisted healing for veterans and families; John rides with the program, and Heather participates with Finley and Hedy.
- **Aging with grace** — supporting person-centered senior care through Chicago Scots / Caledonia Senior Living & Memory Care.
- **Women’s entrepreneurship** — paying forward her Springboard alumna experience so more women CEOs access capital, advisors, and scale.

BANDITAS WILD HORSE PROMISE

Created in response to the 2021 Sand Wash Basin roundup, Banditas provides true “soft landings” for gathered mustangs—especially older stallions and mares who should not be pushed into domestic life. To illuminate the bigger picture, this section highlights one family story DFF knows well: Finley, captured with his band in 2021, is the son of Willie Nelson, a renowned Sand Wash stallion who now anchors Banditas’ sanctuary outreach. Like many families dispersed by gathers, Finley was separated from Willie and his dam Frosty, whose fate remains unknown. Banditas keeps the focus on awareness, dignity, and lifetime care for these American icons.



What a roundup looks like.

A helicopter drives a family band into temporary pens—a traumatic moment for horses. Banditas Wild Horse Promise steps in afterward with soft-landing, lifetime sanctuary for those who can't transition to domestic life—like Willie Nelson, sire of Heather's mustang, Finley.





John & Rio—equine-assisted work that builds trust, calm, & fun.

OPERATION WILD HORSE

In honor of DFF founder John DeBlasio's military service, Operation Wild Horse resonates deeply. The program pairs formerly wild mustangs with veterans and military families for equine-assisted healing—drawing on the shared resilience of mustangs and service members and creating a space where trust, calm, and purpose are rebuilt. Within Heather's family, John rides with OWH; Heather participates alongside him with Finley and Hedy. Together with Sarah (riding Socks), they see firsthand how mustangs like Rio and Socks help veterans and families find their stride.



SPRINGBOARD ENTERPRISES

Springboard accelerates the growth of women-led companies through access to capital, advisors, and a global community. Women founders capture only ~2–3% of U.S. venture capital (just 2% in 2021), and roughly 5% of VC partners are women—yet women-led tech companies have shown 35% higher ROI, and female-founded firms collectively hire 2.5× more people. As a 2015 Healthcare & Technology alumna, Heather supports Springboard’s proven model to close these gaps through capital access, advisors, and community.



CHICAGO SCOTS / CALEDONIA SENIOR LIVING & MEMORY CARE

Heather supports Chicago Scots—Illinois’s first and oldest nonprofit, founded in 1845 (180 years in 2025)—which sustains Caledonia Senior Living & Memory Care and celebrates Scottish culture. This partnership advances a simple belief: every older adult deserves a safe place to age with grace, community, and dignity—delivered through person-centered care across assisted living, skilled nursing, and memory care.



HEATHER HOLMES’s philanthropy reflects her belief in dignity, opportunity, and stewardship. She champions aging with grace through Chicago Scots/Caledonia Senior Living & Memory Care, addressing social isolation and supporting high-quality, person-centered care. A successful founder and 2015 alumna of Springboard’s Healthcare & Technology program, Heather mentors and supports women CEOs to expand access to capital and growth networks. A lifelong horse enthusiast and adopter of two formerly wild mustangs—Finley (Sand Wash Basin, “Oathbringer”) and Hedy (Lost Creek)—she advances humane mustang stewardship with Banditas Wild Horse Promise and supports veterans’ healing alongside their families through Operation Wild Horse.



THIS YEAR, **JOHN** HAS PLEDGED SUPPORT FOR:



THE CIVIC FEDERATION

The Civic Federation's citizen-led effort towards a City Charter for the city of Chicago. While city charters vary in scope and particulars from city to city, they typically establish foundational structures for governance and policymaking.

- Establish the structural components of government
- Formalizing the constitutional authority of city officials
- Establishing rules for the legislative process
- Establishing a formal budget process

- Formalizing rules regarding municipal elections
- Codifying accountability mechanisms

Learn more by visiting the Civic Federation Website. The Civic Federation is an independent, non-partisan government research organization that provides robust and objective fiscal analysis, recommendations, and oversight for the benefit of civic and business leaders, the media, and the general public in Chicago and the State of Illinois.

NEIGHBORHOOD ENTREPRENEURSHIP LAB

NEL is an initiative that pairs community business owners with project advisors, project strategists, community partners, and corporate partners who provide intensive support and financial capital/ grants to help execute a growth initiative.

CHICAGO COUNCIL ON GLOBAL AFFAIRS

Congratulations to Dr. Leslie Vinjamuri for joining Chicago Council on Global Affairs as the president and CEO. Founded in 1922, the Chicago Council on Global Affairs is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing knowledge and engagement in global affairs.

ILLINOIS JOINING FORCES (IJF)

Congratulations to Megan Everett for joining IJF as its new Executive Director. Founded in 2012, IJF helps service members, Veterans, and their families navigate the "sea of goodwill" to find the support they need, when they need it. No one organization can do it all, but Veterans shouldn't have to wander from office to office – or website to website – to determine who does what and which organization can best meet their needs.

CRIME LAB POLICE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

A first-of-its-kind violence reduction initiative that aims to prevent violent crime, support officers, and improve fairness and effectiveness in policing.

- Five-month, robust management and leadership education to police at the commander level
- No cost to the department.
- Better police management practices nationwide
- Focuses on many of America's highest-violence geographies
- Rigorously evaluated to measure its effectiveness, addresses a persistent training gap



JOHN DEBLASIO's philanthropic focus spans a variety of collaborative initiatives leveraging non-profit investments into businesses with societal impact. In addition, he works with multiple civic organizations in Chicago as well as organizations serving communities like veterans and his alma mater, West Point.



Leading a Better Chicago, a Movement dedicated to "innovative ideas, real solutions, and serious leadership."



Megan Everett, Executive Director of IJF

Thanks, as always, for your kindness and support.

Don't hesitate to reach out to any one of us to join us in support of these wonderful organizations.

The Deblasio Family Foundation

