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**Thumbs up, thumbs down**

October 20, 2014

Thumbs up to Dr. [Michael Gorman](#), optometrist and owner of [Family Vision Center](#) in Bridgeport, not only for his longevity in the business but for his service as president of the [Connecticut Visual Health Center](#) (CVHC). The CVHC was formed in 1970 to help provide eye care for the poor. The organization worked with the [Salvation Army](#) on Elm Street in Bridgeport to provide free eye exams and free glasses to people who had no coverage for such care. The CVHC closed in 1985, after Medicaid expanded to cover eye exams and glasses.

Thumbs up to billionaire investor [Steven A. Cohen](#) and his wife Alexandra for their \$20 million donation to [Stamford Hospital](#) to fund pediatric care. The money will fund and create the Cohen Children's Institute in the Whittingham Pavilion, which will have a dedicated pediatric emergency services center in the new Stamford Hospital building to open in 2016. Thumbs up as well to the anonymous donor who gave \$5 million to [Fairfield University](#), which the university intends to use to update and expand the school's recreation center. The money may be a drop in the buckets of enormously wealthy individuals, but their generosity is still to be applauded.

Thumbs down to an apparent diminishing of resources devoted to cancer research not only in Connecticut, but nationwide. Recent news reports showed that Connecticut's share of funding from the [National Cancer Institute](#) (NCI) has dropped 19 percent since 2010. [Yale University](#), the biggest grantee in the state, is receiving \$7 million less. While the impact in the state is significant -- Connecticut grants dropped from \$44.1 million in 2010 to \$33.4 million this year -- more disturbing is the general drop in funding to the NCI, which is a division of [the National Institutes of Health](#), a federal agency. Total funding for the NCI has dropped below \$5 billion for the first time since 2009.

Thumbs up to at least one encouraging economic indicator: Fairfield-based General Electric posted strong third-quarter results and gave an upbeat forecast for the fourth quarter. The company also said U.S. industrial activity is at its highest level since the financial crisis began in 2008. The U.S. is probably the best we've seen it since the financial crisis," GE President [Jeff Immelt](#) said.