

Good People Great Things

SPRING 2005



Photo of Essex in the late 1800s was one of many in the Connecticut River Museum's 2004 Exhibit funded by a Foundation Heritage Enhancement grant.

[GRANTS: MAKING A DIFFERENCE]

How does a community foundation improve the community? One person, one grant, one program at a time. Recently approved grants are making a difference countywide: A Chester resident, with no local family, gets a ride to Middlesex Hospital for a cancer treatment ... a group of children from Middletown's North End neighborhood enjoy Saturday mornings at the new Green Street Arts Center ... volunteers in Deep River & Old Saybrook are trained to use new defibrillators...

(continued inside)



Chester Land Trust volunteers built this sturdy bridge as part of a new nature trail behind the Chester Elementary School with an Environment grant.

The Fund for Women & Girls provided grants in Old Saybrook for older women to learn computer skills and in Middletown for girls to build self-esteem.

“Our vision of enhancing the quality of life in Middlesex County with effective grantmaking is becoming a reality.”

[GRANTS: MAKING A DIFFERENCE, CONTINUED FROM FRONT]

...the original landscaping of the Wadsworth Mansion is assessed and plans for restoration are underway ...Shoreline women with computer anxiety are taught new skills and gain confidence to get a better job or email their grandchildren...Volunteers appointed by the court to protect the interests of abused and neglected children are given training for their important role. Everyday someone's life is enriched, a program is enhanced... a positive difference is made thanks to Community Foundation grants.

Grants are the means by which community foundations meet their mission of improving their service area. Without a large endowment to provide for grantmaking, MCCF is challenged

to find sources for grantmaking. Fortunately, wonderful charitably-minded organizations and individuals have provided income specifically for grantmaking. These funding partners have made it possible for our Community Foundation to provide increasing amounts for competitive grantmaking each fall.

“Our vision of enhancing the quality of life in Middlesex County with effective grantmaking is becoming a reality. We are particularly grateful to the River View Cemetery—Essex, the Connecticut Humanities Council, the Ann T. D’Addario Foundation and Citizens Bank who share our vision, support our efforts and have provided funding for local grantmaking. We are also pleased that the investment performance of our growing endowment

has begun to provide significant income to support grants to nonprofit organizations countywide,” said Patti Anne Vassia, President of the Community Foundation.

The 43 grants approved in December bring total grants to over \$500,000 since the Foundation’s inception seven years ago. The 2004–2005 grants were given in support of eight focus areas: the arts, education, the environment, heritage enhancement, human services, safer communities, neighborhood enhancement, and women and girls. These focus areas were determined by the Foundation Board of Directors to meet donors’ interests and the needs of the area. Since competitive grantmaking began in 1999, the amount has grown steadily to this year’s \$95,000. The positive impact of grantmaking increases with the growth of the Foundation.



Sarah Slutzky Shapiro, 1900 Polish immigrant to Middletown, was just one of the interesting faces in the Middlesex County Historical Society’s “Their Own Stories” exhibit. The exhibit is now on their website thanks to a MCCF grant.

ZING WENT THE STRINGS

Zing! Went the strings of their hearts, as forty-two third-graders tuned up their violins and cellos for a winter concert at Snow School in Middletown on January 12. These first- and second-year students, including many recipients of scholarships provided by the Middlesex County Community Foundation Elizabeth Swaim Arts Enrichment Fund, tackled a repertoire that ranged from “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star” to a chorus by George Friderich Handel. Violin instructor, Anna Falkenau, and cello instructor, Pinar Gosterisli, directed the students, with piano accompaniment by Ali Brandt.

Middletown Schools’ Music Director Marco Gaylord acted as Master of Ceremonies. “This is a great thing for the city of Middletown. In a few years, we will have string players again at the high school level, all because of this program,” he stated.

Ruth Montgomery, who has been volunteer program coordinator since the Program began, remarked, “This is like serious fun. The teachers bring so much enthusiasm. The children really respond to that.” The program is still in its early phase, she emphasized, “We hope that any child who wants to be in the program can be included. We welcome contributions to the Fund, so that scholarships will continue to be available.”

PARTNERSHIP PROVIDES RIDES AND SO MUCH MORE

Every morning 'John' gets picked up for work at his home in Clinton. The van he rides in is one of two new ones purchased by Gilead Community Services with the most recent \$50,000 CHEFA grant awarded in Middlesex County. Gilead provides housing, clinical support and recovery services to individuals with psychiatric disabilities. With service centers in Essex, Middletown and Chester, Gilead needed new vans for transporting clients to job sites and medical appointments. This grant not only helps to expand transportation services to an underserved low income population, it also frees up operating funds to support basic clinical and case management services for those in need.

The Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority (CHEFA) grant program seeks to provide alternative sources of funds to nonprofits that offer essential health, educational, cultural, and childcare services to the broadest number of Connecticut residents in areas of the state identified as communities in need. Nominations from community foundations are required for all grant applications.

In 2003, CHEFA awarded its first Middlesex County grants...\$50,000 to the Community Health Center, for an Obesity Prevention and Treatment Initiative, and \$50,000 the Oddfellows Playhouse for its Neighborhood Troupes program for at-risk youth.

"These grants totaling \$150,000 represent a direct and positive community benefit of having established the Middlesex County Community Foundation—and we hope this is just the beginning. Our local organizations are eligible for these CHEFA funds because our Foundation is here serving the community," noted Bonnie Bennet, Director of Grants and Special Programs, who administers the CHEFA process.

COMPANIES OFFER SUPPORT AND CHALLENGE TO OTHERS

What do Middletown-based Middlesex Mutual Assurance, Whelen Engineering in Chester and The Clark Group of Essex share in common besides their long successful history in Middlesex County? A vested interest in and generous support of our growing Community Foundation!

The three companies have provided exceptional support to establish our Community Foundation as one of Connecticut's newest. Now the three have collectively offered \$125,000 as a challenge grant to help the Foundation in its growing years. Their challenge provides \$1 for every \$2 given or pledged to help the Foundation 2004 through 2008. The 2004 challenge has been met and efforts are under way to meet this year's necessary \$44,000 to maximize the 2005 challenge match.

"We see the future community benefit of having a successful Community

Foundation," reported Tom Ford, Senior Vice President for Middlesex Mutual Assurance Company. "The Foundation and its donors will join our company in providing grants that improve our area for everyone." Sonny Whelen, Whelen's Executive Vice President, agrees, "The processes and knowledge of the Foundation staff and volunteers assure wise deployment of charitable donations for today and tomorrow. We are glad to help by supporting Foundation administration and encouraging others to join us." Herb Clark of The Clark Group and Foundation Board Chair adds, "We are grateful to have these respected companies join with our Board in supporting our vision of a vital Community Foundation to serve donors, nonprofit organizations and their many constituents. It takes a community to build a strong foundation. We welcome all to join in supporting our efforts."



Developing healthy minds and bodies helps build self-esteem in Rushford's Peer Leadership Program. The outdoor challenge course pictured was just one of their activities supported by the Community Foundation.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Swaim Spring String Concert

May 25 7:00 PM at Middletown High School.

Grant Seekers Workshop

May 18th 8:00 AM-12:00 Noon

(Co-sponsored with Liberty Bank Foundation)

Hosted by Middlesex Community College.

Call for flyer and registration information.

Fall Competitive Grantmaking Schedule

September 1 *RFP's Prepared*

September 28 *Letters of Intent Due*

October 24 *Grants Committee
Seeks Proposals*

November 14 *Requested Proposals Due*

December 5 *Grants Committee
Recommends Grants*

December 21 *Board Approves Grants*

December 27 *Organizations Notified*

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Learn more about us at our new website!

www.MiddlesexCountyCF.org

The Middlesex County Community Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life in Middlesex County. Our mission is to work with charitably-minded individuals and organizations to build permanent endowments and other charitable funds, and to support local non-profit organizations through effective grantmaking to address community needs.

A UNIQUE GIFT SOLUTION

A Gift

*Was made by Patti Anne Vassia, to the
Middlesex County Community Foundation*

**In Honor of Libby Davis
In Celebration of her 102ND Birthday**

Looking for a special gift for Mother's Day, a summer wedding, your parents' anniversary or that child that has everything and needs no more? We can help! Why not consider a lasting gift to the Foundation to honor that graduate, the newly-wed couple, newborn or someone special who is celebrating a milestone. It's as easy as writing a check and letting the Foundation know the recipient's name and address. The Foundation does the rest—sends a gift announcement and lets them know of your thoughtfulness on the date of the occasion.

You may make an unrestricted gift or designate your gift to a specific endowed fund such as the Fund for Women & Girls, Arts Fund, Memorial Fund or to any already established fund. Think ahead and avoid the last minute panic. Just give us a call at 860 347-0025 and let us walk you through the options to find the perfect gift solution.

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