

Good People Great Things

A \$6,300 grant to the Essex Land Conservation Trust made possible by the River View Cemetery partnership will make for easier access and enjoyment of the Millrace Preserve in Ivoryton.

SPRING 2007



[TRANSITION, CHANGE, GROWTH: FOUNDATION BYWORDS]

Kids say, “Same-ol’, Same-ol’,” meaning boring, unchanging, whatever. If you’re not changing, you’re not growing. Our Community Foundation is really growing, as change and transition are trademarks of this, our tenth year. We have a new board chairman, new officers, and are about to have new staff leadership. Don’t worry — this change is welcome, planned, and positions us for an even brighter future. Besides, our founders are staying with us; continuing their active participation and their generous support...

(Read on to learn that we are not even close to being Same-ol’, Same-ol’.)



Marcia Kalayjian
New Vice Chair



Pat Crowley
Treasurer



Tom Pastorello
Assistant Treasurer



Anita Ford Saunders
New Vice Chair



Dave Royston
New Grants Comm. Chair

GRANTS ADDRESS UNSEEN COUNTY NEEDS



A cursory view could lead one to believe that Middlesex County is filled with idyllic communities that are veritable utopias. Recent surveys tell a much different story. The annual count of homeless in the county done in January found 311 homeless. This number does not include, for example, families on the shoreline who room in motels until tourist season rates compel them to live in their cars or in state parks.

Middlesex United Way and Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce leaders Kevin Wilhelm and Larry McHugh are chairing a coalition of leaders that includes clergy, elected officials, and others committed to ending homelessness in the county in 10 years. The Foundation is pleased to see such a determined effort to address this critical need. A \$5,000 Foundation planning grant, combined with similar amounts from the United Way and Liberty Bank Foundation, will begin the process that has been successful in other communities. Continued commitment from major stakeholders can meet the coalition's aggressive goal.

From the shoreline to Middletown, agencies are guided by caring individuals meeting the needs of these homeless and hungry. Recent \$5,000 Foundation grants to the Shoreline Soup Kitchens and Pantries and to St. Vincent DePaul Place in Middletown will support volunteer efforts and fill in the gaps in donated food. These grants are aimed at helping correct another problem of the hidden poverty in the area. A 2005 Federal Food Security study conducted by Wesleyan University students showed: 5.4% of Middletown households experience hunger, going without food for one or more meals a day. Another 20% were described as Food Insecure that is lacking resources for a healthy diet. These numbers compare to 2.3% and 9% respectively for the state as a whole.

"The needs of those living at or below the poverty line that are hidden to most of us in our community are recognized and supported by the Community Foundation. We at The Shoreline Soup Kitchens & Pantries are so very grateful having a funding partner in the work of providing food and fellowship to those in need," Executive Director Patty Dowling said.

Shoreline Soup Kitchens and Pantries (top two photos) and **St. Vincent DePaul Place** in Middletown (bottom photo) serve more than 86,000 meals annually, in addition to other services. Donated food, cash donations and grants such as those from the Community Foundation make it possible for staff and volunteers to prepare and serve food to the neediest in our community.

FOUNDING DIRECTOR STEPS UP AS NEW BOARD CHAIR



Robert J. Kirkpatrick Jr.

A founder of the Middlesex County Community Foundation, Robert J. Kirkpatrick Jr. has devoted his career to philanthropy. He carries that devotion in a new direction as he assumes the chairmanship of the Foundation's board of directors.

Kirkpatrick plans to guide the organization into its next phase. The board's adoption of a strategic plan in 2006 began that process, he said.

"The founders will all be off the board by 2008 and the Foundation needed to solidify its position in a changing philanthropic world," Kirkpatrick explained. The plan, which includes increasing the staff size from 2 1/2 to 3 1/2 full-time equivalent employees, will be "to increase operating and endowment and to grow estate funds," he said.

His goals for the next two years are to assure a smooth transition of the board and the staff. "We've already achieved much of that with the board, having expertise in investment management, marketing, grants management, awareness of the needs of the entire county," he said. "Under the able leadership of Janice Atkeson we are searching for a president." He noted that the Foundation has been "blessed by the work and success of our founding president, Patti Vassia," who will continue assisting present donors and cultivating potential donors after she steps down as president. *(See Vassia's message on the next page...)*

As one of the fourteen people whose vision gave birth to the Foundation in 1997, Kirkpatrick has served since then in myriad capacities: As chair of the Grants Committee, he instituted site visits for members to visit grantees in parts of the county where they did not live and work. Thus Northern County residents reviewed the progress of organizations in Old Saybrook and Clinton, while Shoreline members oversaw the work of grantees in Cromwell and Middletown. Kirkpatrick was responsible for another milestone when he helped secure the first substantial endowed fund—\$100,000 from the Middlesex Mutual Assurance Company in 1999.

As he assumes the role of chair, Kirkpatrick will be assisted by vice chairs Marcia Kalayjian of Durham and Anita Ford Saunders of Middletown. Rounding out the Foundation's 2007 officers are Patrick J. Crowley of Old Lyme as treasurer, assisted by Thomas J. Pastorello of East Hampton and Ralph H. Shaw II of Middletown as secretary.

PRESIDENT'S SOCIETY BOOSTS FUND RAISING

"Blockbuster" response is what Dave Preston, Development Committee Chair, called the results of last year's President's Society effort to support Foundation operations. Imagine, forty-seven (47!) generous folks and businesses responded with gifts of \$1,000 or more to letters signed by Bob Herbst of Essex and Joe Lombardo of Middlefield. "We are delighted with the number and amount of friends our letters surfaced to help the Foundation grow," said Herbst. "We hope they will renew for this year and others will join them too," added Lombardo.

President's Society members donated \$67,000 that was matched \$1 for every \$2 by the Clark Group, Middlesex Mutual Assurance and Whelen Engineering to yield 50% of operating costs. In recognition of their generosity Preston and his wife Barbara treated the members to a lovely luncheon at Restaurant du Village, in Chester in December. They have promised to do the same for 2007. Visit the Foundation's website, www.MiddlesexCountyCF.org to see a list of 2006 President's Society Members.



Good People Great Things Wins Gold Award

This newsletter has been recognized with a Gold Award by the Council on Foundations in the 2007 Wilmer Rich Shields Awards Program for Excellence in Communications. The Foundation is indebted to the talented staff team of **How 2 Design** which has provided creative design services for this piece and the annual reports as their gift since its inception. Special thanks are due to Noemi Kearns, Principal of How 2 Design and Liz Petry, former Foundation board member, who provides writing and editorial support. Pictured (left to right) front row: Ruth Zelanski, Katie Thurber; back row: Keith Edwards, Noemi Kearns, and Josh Comen.



Dear Friends,

I love to celebrate special occasions and 2007 is full of them. It was 40 years ago I came back to the Connecticut River Valley; it was 10 years ago we established our Community Foundation; and it is the year of a significant birthday. I feel so blessed to have had three rewarding careers (YMCA, United Way and Community Foundation) that have increasingly improved the quality of life of children and adults here in Middlesex County. Each career has built on the knowledge, experiences, donors and the volunteers I have worked with in building a better community.

My greatest satisfaction has been the progress we have made in building a vital Community Foundation. There is much more to be done, for it to become a self-sustaining philanthropic force for good. The Board and I agree that to grow in impact, we need more than our present staff. While I am still “young,” we want to use my time, talents and relationships to best advantage. I have become proficient at administrative detail but my heart is, and has always been, in meeting and connecting with people. Our new strategic plan provides for just that. Soon I will be refocusing my attention to the thing I love most, working with good people who want to do great things for our community.

A Search Committee is now seeking just the right person to become the Foundation's new president. I look forward to introducing that person to our many friends and supporters, working together and focusing on growing our endowment and building an even better Middlesex County. So, I am not retiring (an adjective that will never describe me!) . . . I am refocusing my efforts on doing what I most enjoy. With your continued support I look forward to celebrating an even better Community Foundation with you and the community.

Onward,

Patti

Patti Anne Vassia, *President*

Soloist Competition winners (Left to right) Allison Lindsay, Andrei Lieders, Gregory Laucella, Jessie Daniels and Anthony Pandolfe will perform with professional musicians from the Hartford Symphony at 7 PM on May 15 as **Middletown High School Goes to the Symphony** at the Bushnell with a \$5,000 sponsoring grant from the Foundation's Elizabeth Swaim Arts Enrichment Fund.



DATES TO REMEMBER

Sunday May 13 – Mother's Day

Consider honoring the favorite women in your life with a memorial or honorary gift to the Fund for Women & Girls.

Thursday, May 24 – 7:00 PM

Swaim String Spring Concert
Middletown, Snow School

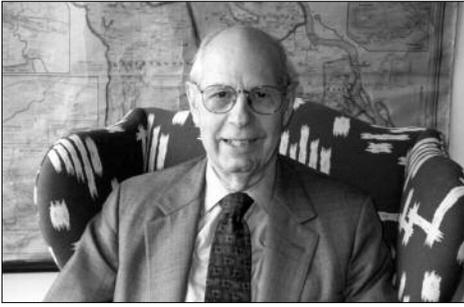
Friday, May 25 – 8:00 PM

Premier of 17 Miles Film Project
Old Saybrook, Middle School

Fall Competitive Grantmaking Schedule

- September 1 *RFP posted on Website*
- September 26 *Letters of Intent due*
- October 15 *Grants Committee Seeks Proposals*
- November 12 *Requested Proposals Due*
- December 5 *Grants Committee Recommends Grants*
- December 19 *Board Approves Grants*
- December 28 *Organizations Notified*

PAST BOARD MEMBERS CONTINUE SERVICE



Ralph H. Shaw II



Sari A. Rosenbaum



Liz Petry

All three departing members of the Foundation's board of directors, Ralph H. Shaw II, Sari A. Rosenbaum, and Liz Petry, belie the term "retiring." Though they will no longer serve on the board, as they have served the maximum of three terms, all three are committed to making contributions to the Foundation.

The most work will go to **Ralph H. Shaw II** of Middletown, who will continue to serve voluntarily as Board Secretary. He noted, "As such I record the minutes of Board and committee meetings. In its own way it allows me to stay in touch but not have a vote or otherwise act as a director."

Shaw was a member of the founding committee for the Foundation and served as the chair of the board of directors for the first seven years. He became involved, he said, "From the outset, I was enthusiastic because of the obvious need of some such activity; because some really influential and thoughtful folks thought it would work and were willing to be supportive; and because Jean [his wife] and I clearly could never fund a foundation on our own but it would give us a vehicle to help repay our own debt to the local scene. Someone (probably Derry [D'Oench]) convinced me that the Foundation would need a titular head of the organization during its formative years . . . hence I became the first Board Chair.

"While the Foundation is not as well endowed as had been hoped at this juncture," he added, "the support has been wonderful and all of us remain enthusiastic and optimistic about the future as we face so much change this year."

Rosenbaum will remain an active member Fund for Women & Girls Committee. She laughingly said she became involved with the Foundation "because Willard [McRae] and Patti [Vassia] twisted my arm.

"I did not know what a community foundation was or what it did, but they assured me that Middlesex County needed one—that there was nothing that covered the whole range of what those organizations did."

At the beginning she was unsure of her role, she noted, but serving on the Foundation's Grants Committee gave her an idea of the breadth and scope of the operation. When the Board was challenged to increase the endowment she teamed up with former board member Jean Caron to focus on serving the needs of the county's women and girls. Then, Rosenbaum said, "I felt I was making a real contribution." The Fund for Women & Girls now holds more than \$200,000 and has provided \$45,558 in grants to empower women and girls to become self-sufficient and reach their potential.

McRae was also responsible for recruiting **Petry**, who has served nine years on the board. "She brings the county with her," he said at the time of her appointment—pointing out the fact that she was born in Old Saybrook and has lived in Deep River, Cromwell, and Middletown, where she now makes her home.

As a working journalist when she first served on the board, Petry struggled to stay through early morning meetings. After she left journalism, she turned her writing and editing skills to helping produce copy for the newsletters, the Web site and other Foundation publications.

"I've discovered how gratifying it is to see one's contributions making a difference locally," Petry said. "I want to continue to let people in the county know about marvelous work of the Foundation so that it can continue to thrive."

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Visit our 2007 Award-Winning Website

www.MiddlesexCountyCF.org

COX FAMILY BENEFITS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Some donors experience the real rewards of philanthropy in the joy they bring to others when making a gift. Hugh and Judy Cox took advantage of new IRA transfer legislation to establish the Cox Family Fund for Middlesex Community College—an opportunity to give back to the college that educated two of their sons. A recent major gift from this Fund provided new analytical chromatographic equipment for the College's chemistry lab. The new equipment gives MxCC students a competitive edge when it comes to experience and credentials, College President Wilfredo Nieves said.



MxCC Professor H.H. Wiley (foreground) demonstrates how a sample chemical is injected for analysis by the new lab equipment. Former student Bruce Cox, left, Bruce's wife Cheryl Cox, and Judy and Hugh Cox look on.



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.

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