Sweet Surprises: How an Ice Cream Cone Tin Led to a Powerful Partnership

Journalist, community volunteer, and former CFMC board member Elisabeth Petry received an amazing gift from her mother, acclaimed author Ann Petry: an ice cream cone tin containing over 400 letters and photographs handed down through five generations of her family.

When Liz shared what she found with her cousin Ashley James and his wife Kathryn Golden, co-founders of Searchlight Educational Media, a new idea started to take shape. The trio saw more than family memorabilia in that tin; they also saw local history and legacy. They knew this story needed to be shared. They agreed on a documentary film project, For Dear Mother’s Sake: The James Family Letters that Shaped Ann Petry.

The story began with family patriarch Willis Samuel James, as he escaped from a plantation during the Civil War and settled in Hartford around 1866. It continued through recent history in Old Saybrook where Liz’s family had a pharmacy and where her mother raised her family and authored several books. “The title of the film comes from a letter that Willis H. James, son of the patriarch, wrote from a Georgia lock-up to his sister in Saybrook. He implored Bertha ‘for dear mother’s sake’ to send $35 (now about $900) so he could bribe the sheriff and avoid being lynched,” said Liz. “When I read this line, I knew we had a treasure that needed to be shared beyond my family.”

The first step in any project is planning and securing the assistance of local historians and experts. To start the planning process, the team needed a partner to handle potential grant funding, a fiscal sponsor with the know-how in the intricacies of donations, funding and reporting. That’s where the Community Foundation came in.

“I knew I could turn to the Community Foundation for guidance and support,” said Liz. “They have the skills, the people, and the desire to help my family accomplish our goal. ‘Helping good people do great things’ is more than their tagline. It’s who they are.”

Liz has a long familiarity with the Community Foundation and how it helps individuals put their passions to work in the community. Liz is a former Community Foundation board member, a founding member of the Sari A. Rosenbaum Fund for Women & Girls, and established the Ann and George Petry Fund in memory of her parents to support the arts in Middlesex County. Liz knew that the right local partner needed to launch this project was right in her own back yard. She and her cousins established a fiscal project fund, the James Family Documentary Fund, with the Community Foundation.

Together, the James Family and the Community Foundation received a grant of $23,219 from Connecticut Humanities to cover expenses associated with the planning phase of the documentary project. “Connecticut Humanities helps its grantees tell stories – and what a powerful story the James family has to tell! We are proud to support this project about a Connecticut author and the history and legacy that shaped her work and family,” explained Lauren Miller, Director of Grants and Programs at Connecticut Humanities.

Recently, state and local representatives joined members of the Community Foundation, the Old Saybrook Historical Society and Connecticut Humanities to celebrate the award and to officially launch the project. State Representative Matthew Lesser presented an official citation from the state General Assembly: “This documentary will enrich Connecticut’s historical narrative and bring more attention to the important contributions that African-Americans have made to our state’s history.”

“We at the Community Foundation of Middlesex County are proud to serve as the fiscal sponsor for this exceptional project,” said Cynthia H. Clegg, President and CEO. “The James family has enriched our local heritage through their many extraordinary contributions, and we are excited to help ensure that their story is shared with our neighbors today and for generations to come. Thanks to the support of our generous donors, the Community Foundation is able to take on projects such as this. We look forward to helping bring even more wonderful initiatives to our community.”

Harry Burr made his career in insurance, but makes his life in giving to his community.

He is renowned for his love of community and the many issues, services, and organizations he has championed in our region – including the Community Foundation. An early ambassador and supporter of CFMC, Harry knows that the Community Foundation is determined to help neighbors and friends improve life today – and forever. When he decided to do something special in memory of long-time employee Deborah Lombardo, he turned to the Community Foundation.

Deborah Lombardo lived her entire life in Portland and loved her town. She also loved her work as an account manager for Harry, with his agency, Brown & Brown Insurance of Connecticut, dba McCutcheon Burr & Sons. “Deb was a great person, always happy, always taking care of everyone in the office. You had to be happy around her because you knew she was sincere and wanted you to do well at everything,” recalled Harry.

To honor her, Harry established the Deborah L. Lombardo Education Assistance Fund, with an annual award given to a Portland High School graduating senior pursuing a two- or four-year degree or advanced technical training. The award is given to a student who has distinguished him or herself through a commitment to community service and academic achievement, and has displayed a financial need. Alexis Sylvester was selected as the first recipient in 2015. Alexis and her father, Andrew, joined Harry at the Community Foundation just before she left to start her first year at Eastern Connecticut State University. Though her major is undeclared, Alexis shared with Harry and CFMC that she is very interested in marine sciences, early childhood, and possibly a career as an MRI technician. Most importantly, Alexis explained she is excited to meet new people, explore new places, and see what lies ahead for her.

“Deb would have liked Alexis,” Harry stated after the meeting. “They both share this extraordinary outlook on life. Deb would have been pleased with the selection of the first recipient – and she would have followed Alexis throughout her career.”

As Alexis settles on her college major, she will take with her a renewed love of her home town, and a new friend in Harry Burr. Harry, in turn, has established a wonderful tribute to Deb Lombardo and the home town she loved – ensuring Portland’s youth can find their extraordinary place in life for years to come.

** Turning a Passion into a Plan: The Deborah L. Lombardo Education Assistance Fund**

Harry Burr with Deborah L. Lombardo Education Assistance Award Recipient Alexis Sylvester and her father, Andrew.

**President’s Corner**

Our community is blessed to have so many incredible people and businesses working to make Middlesex County vibrant. Each one of you – working together through the Community Foundation of Middlesex County – does so much for our neighbors and friends. Yet what is truly remarkable about our community is that each and every day you prove that together, we can and do improve the quality of life for everyone.

As we celebrate all that we do together as a community, we pause to remember two very special individuals who understood that the biggest impact in our region is made when we work as a whole – Joe Lombardo and Arlene Mazzotta. Their commitment to and love for Middlesex County is legendary and will guide all of us to work together to continue to make Middlesex County a great place to live, work, and play.

**Joe Lombardo** led a rich life of service to his community and country. Beyond his service in the Army Air Corps during World War II and his career as a banking executive, Joe gave tirelessly to the area he loved, serving on boards, involving himself in local politics, and establishing a legacy for generations to come. The Community Foundation was honored to have Joe as a board member and his family as founding donors. Joe and his family established the J. Guy Lombardo Fund in memory of his son, Guy, in the early years of the Community Foundation, and since its establishment, that fund has provided support to multiple nonprofits.

**Arlene Mazzotta** was everyone’s friend. She was a pioneer in so many ways and set an example of commitment, honesty, integrity and compassion. A founding member of the Sari A. Rosenbaum Fund for Women and Girls, Arlene understood the importance of providing women and girls with the programs, services and mentors they needed to reach their full potential. Arlene and A.R. Mazzotta Employment Specialists were also a founding member of the Community Foundation’s Council of Business Partners, championing the goal of ending bullying and all mean-spirited behavior in our community.

We remember Arlene and Joe for all they accomplished and for their love of our region. We say Thank You to you for your caring and your generous ways that continue to make an impact in our community today and build a vibrant and healthy future. This issue celebrates stories of extraordinary generosity within our community – and there are many more to tell! If you do not already receive our e-news editions, be sure to subscribe on our website at MiddlesexCountyCF.org to find out all the great things you and our friends and neighbors are doing throughout the year. Let us know your stories so that together we can continue to make a positive difference in Middlesex County today and in the future, just as Arlene and Joe did.

Best Regards,

Cynthia H. Clegg
President & CEO

Cynthia H. Clegg
Guilford Savings Bank (GSB) and its employees are well-known for their community involvement. As we like to say at the Community Foundation of Middlesex County, “They get it.” They know that everything that happens in our community – the successes, and the challenges – affect each and every one of us in our daily lives.

One of the core tenets of Guilford Savings Bank is to give back to the communities they serve. They have a long history of doing just that in so many ways. Their employees’ gift of time, commitment and dedication to volunteering thousands of community service hours in support of nonprofit organizations is legendary – but oh so true.

For several years, Guilford Savings Bank has been partnering with the Community Foundation of Middlesex County (CFMC) through CFMC’s Nonprofit Resource Center, sponsoring a half day workshop for area nonprofit organizations at little or no cost to the organizations. These seminars allow organizations to work with nationally recognized trainers on a wide variety of topics and thus strengthen the professional skills of staff and board alike.

Guilford Savings Bank chose to take their community involvement one step further in 2015. Recognizing that the Community Foundation’s mission is aligned with GSB’s core values to strengthen and support communities, they chose to honor their efforts by establishing a Field of Interest Fund to support Old Saybrook and the surrounding area.

“Ensuring that communities are set up to thrive in the future takes meaningful investments today,” said Timothy P. Geelan, President & CEO of Guilford Savings Bank. “The Community Foundation of Middlesex County is a local role model for philanthropy in action, making them a natural partner for Guilford Savings Bank. By establishing a fund at CFMC, we’re able to help extend the foundation’s extraordinary contribution to our communities for years to come.”

In the future, the Guilford Savings Bank Charitable Fund will provide two annual educational assistance awards to Old Saybrook High School for graduating seniors and will support programs and services for nonprofit organizations working with low-to-moderate income individuals in Middlesex County.

“We are honored Guilford Savings Bank chose to work with and through CFMC to support the Old Saybrook community. Guilford Savings Bank is a great partner,” stated Cynthia H. Clegg, President and CEO, Community Foundation of Middlesex County. “They care deeply about their customers, their employees, their whole community, and this Fund will be one more way Guilford Savings Bank ensures their community thrives.”

Our thanks to all at Guilford Savings Bank for demonstrating that neighbors helping neighbors goes a long way.

Guilford Savings Bank is Doubling Your Impact

GSB is a great community partner, always innovative, and always finding ways to “Live Local Give Local.” The Bank is continuously looking for new ways to increase its community support and challenge its neighbors and friends to do the same.

GSB is offering an incredible year end gift. GSB will match up to a cumulative total of $10,000 donated to the Community Foundation by December 31, 2015. Whatever your passion, GSB will make your gift go even farther with their generous gift.

“GSB is an incredible friend and partner to the Community Foundation,” remarked Wally Jones, Chairman of the Community Foundation Board of Directors. “We are very thankful for the generous challenge offered by GSB. This is just another example how businesses, nonprofits and individuals can work together to impact the communities of Middlesex County.”

Many heartfelt thanks to Guilford Savings Bank for its support and for Helping Good People Do Great Things. We’re honored that GSB is working with the Community Foundation to make a bigger impact in our community each and every day.

Guilford Savings Bank
Equal Housing Lender • Member FDIC • gsb-yourbank.com
The Shulman Family is Helping Make East Hampton Bully Free

Teresa and Dave Shulman, along with their children Liz and Bob, are partnering with the East Hampton Rotary and the Community Foundation of Middlesex County Council of Business Partners to bring the Campaign for Bully-Free Communities and the No Bully Zone program to the East Hampton Middle School.

Dave Shulman is no stranger to CFMC and the Council of Business Partners’ Campaign for Bully-Free Communities. As a founding Council member, Dave and Suburban Stationers have been involved since day one, from the development of the No Bully Zone program to last year’s launch of the Campaign for Bully-Free Communities. Bringing the program to his own home town was a logical next step for Dave and his family.

“For us, the decision to bring this program to East Hampton was natural,” said Dave Shulman. “We have called East Hampton home for the past 36 years. Both of our children graduated from East Hampton public schools. Our family business, Suburban Stationers, was born in East Hampton before moving to Middletown. But most important, all four of us experienced bullying during our childhoods. So when we saw the opportunity to help our home town be a bully-free community, we had to help.”

East Hampton Middle School joins a growing list of No Bully Zone programs, schools and participants throughout Middlesex County. The program has also been adapted for school bus drivers on buses. This fall, M&J Bus trained 450 drivers at 13 locations across the state to be UP-Standers to bullying.

Since 2009, the Community Foundation of Middlesex County and its Council of Business Partners have worked to put an end to bullying. The No-Bully Zone program, developed by the Council and Rushford, a Hartford Healthcare partner, has been delivered to close to 7,500 students, educators, school bus drivers and parents. This peer-to-peer and train-the-trainer program emphasizes empowerment and gives practical tools to help everyone stand up to bullying. The No Bully Zone program focuses on the importance of mutual respect, trust, and involvement. The program underscores the value of our differences, and encourages each of us to respect those differences in others. The program is delivered by experts on Rushford’s prevention team.

“We have seen great results after delivering the program in area middle schools,” said Sheryl Sprague, Rushford Center Prevention Manager. “My team and I are excited to bring the program across the river. We can’t wait to see what a whole new community of middle schoolers can do, thanks to the support of individuals such as the Shulmans and the Council of Business Partners.”

You, too, can join the Shulman family and become “UP-Standers” in our community. Take the pledge at bullyfree.middlesexcountycf.org/take-pledge; share the pledge with friends and family; follow the Campaign for Bully-Free Communities on Facebook (facebook.com/Campaign.Bullyfree.Communities); and contact the Community Foundation of Middlesex County to bring the Campaign to your school, organization, business and community.

Leave a Legacy

It can be awkward to talk about “leaving your legacy,” yet planning is important, especially for the nonprofit organizations you have volunteered for and care so much about. Seven nonprofit organizations partnered with CFMC to host the “Keep Calm and Plan Your Legacy” gathering at Middlesex Community College, exploring a multitude of ways to leave a personal legacy to carry on one’s passions well into the future.

Our thanks to Fran Ludwig, Board President of Gilead Community Services, for sharing her personal and touching story, and to the panel of three local financial advisors, David Christopher of LPL Financial, John Ivimey of Reid & Riege, and Gary P. Salva of Sagemark Consulting, who shared their technical expertise with attendees.

Special thanks to our nonprofit partners for their efforts in making the evening possible: Community Music School, Gilead Community Services, MARC Community Resources, Middlesex Community College, Middlesex United Way, and YMCA of Northern Middlesex County.
The conversations about leaving one’s legacy are important and this is just the beginning.

Leaving a legacy is as easy as 1... 2... 3... 4...

1. Set aside a gift in your will to benefit your favorite nonprofit organization.
2. Direct income of a life insurance policy, IRA, or pension plan to benefit your favorite nonprofit organization.
3. Talk with your advisor about the tax advantages you can enjoy now by leaving a gift to benefit your favorite nonprofit organization.
4. Spread the word. Let family, friends and advisors know that you’ve taken responsibility for your legacy and for the well-being of a nonprofit you care about.

Consider making your legacy permanent — taking a single gift and endowing it to do good every year... forever.

To learn more about how you can leave a legacy for Middlesex County, contact the Community Foundation of Middlesex County at (860) 347-0025. There’s no end to the good YOU can do.
Thea Putnam not only believed in her community, she embraced it... and she wanted others to join her.

Thea retired from New York to Essex in 2004, and with her husband, Phil, soon became active in community organizations, including the Community Foundation of Middlesex County. Thea was particularly fond of the Live Local Give Local campaign. She championed its approach and knew that together, when we pool our resources, the impact on the community where we work, play, raise our children, and call home is magnified and multiplied... and that's what she did through the Community Foundation.

In celebration of Thea’s life and her love for CFMC, Phil generously hosted their many friends at Marley’s Café in Essex, with an element of surprise that would have delighted Thea and her love of all things local. Each guest was encouraged to write his or her favorite Middlesex County nonprofit on a slip of paper.

At the end of the evening, Phil selected three slips of paper from those collected earlier and announced that the combined donations of the evening would be used to award three grants in celebration of Thea, and of all who do great things for our area. With a great deal of excitement and pleasure, Phil and his friends awarded grants to Shoreline Soup Kitchens and Pantries, Essex Library Association, and Community Music School.

“This event and the grants were a fitting tribute to Thea,” said Phil. “We could not have asked for a more perfect evening or outcome. Thea and I both believe in Live Local Give Local – all it stands for – community, neighbors, home, and making a difference together. And this is what the Community Foundation is – a great organization that listens to its donors and the nonprofits and helps make the connections. Spending an evening with friends, supporting the Community Foundation, and having the opportunity to impact three wonderful nonprofits in our community is Live Local Give Local.”

Helping Good People Do Great Things – we are incredibly lucky to have friends like Phil and his guests who care and who make an impact in our community. Thank You for once again proving Philanthropy Matters. Philanthropy Works.
Golf is a Game of Faith... (and a little bit of practice, of course)... on so many levels

If you’re a golfer, you know that it takes faith that your next round will be good – even great. If you’re not a golfer, you probably know a golfer and understand that at the heart of every round is not only those great shots, but also the camaraderie generated both during and after the round. Yet what everyone understands – whether a golfer or a friend – is that golf takes commitment, passion, and a belief that each game will provide a new story to share.

Well, this is the new story to share – all because of the love of the game and community.

Two decades ago, some friends and business colleagues decided to use their love of golf and their commitment to community to make a difference. St. Mary’s Parish, Portland, and Congregation Adath Israel, Middletown, established the Interfaith Open Golf Tournament, creating an opportunity to play golf and raise money – together – to support their faith organizations and nonprofit organizations working in our community, while also creating an environment to improve cultural understanding.

This group of caring individuals and friends, colleagues, local businesses and fellow golfers is legendary for its generous ways. Over the years the tournament proceeds have supported health and human services organizations working in our community. The Interfaith Open Golf Tournament was a founding member of the Community Foundation of Middlesex County’s Council of Business Partners Fund and continues to support the No Bully Zone program and Campaign for Bully-Free Communities Initiative, ensuring our youth grow up in a positive, supportive community.

Fast forward to 2015. The Interfaith Open Golf Tournament has grown to an event that sells out almost overnight, and the organizing committee decided to take the next step in their community philanthropy. With a portion of the proceeds of the 2015 tournament, they established the Interfaith Community Circle of Leadership Fund. The Fund honors the efforts, leadership, and values of a special community of champions and has been established in honor of Buzzy Levin, Art Director, Gene Sullivan, Dick Carella, and Irwin Sitkin – individuals who know that a community of faith and a game of golf have a lot in common – the ability to do the right thing and help others. The Fund will benefit nonprofit organizations working to develop and guide future leaders, instilling in our youth a passion for and a commitment to community.

The Community Foundation of Middlesex County is incredibly lucky to know so many individuals who are quiet and unassuming, humble and generous. The Interfaith Community Circle of Leadership Fund established by a circle of leaders who look for every opportunity to do more – give more, is, we think, A Hole In One!
Web Campaign
Makes Philanthropy Simple

Do you ever feel like giving should be easier?
Or more connected to your personal passions?
We couldn’t agree more.

One of our roles at the Community Foundation is to help our neighbors find simple yet fulfilling ways to support our community. We have a long list of ideas and we're ready to share them.

Curious?
Visit the Community Foundation’s 15 Days of Giving on our website at MiddlesexCountyCF.org/Days-of-Giving.

Share your ideas, passions, and interests as well as your favorite Middlesex County nonprofits with us - you can send us an e-mail, Info@MiddlesexCountyCF.org, or using #CFMC15Days, share it on our Facebook page, www.Facebook.com/CommunityFoundationMC and on Twitter at @CFMC_CT.