

## Foundation and United Way Expand Summer Learning Initiative



*Foundation grant nearly doubles reach of the Summer Learning Initiative.*

Summer is a season of fun and enrichment for some families. But for low-income children, summer can be a time of learning loss. Research shows that while middle class children improve reading skills over the summer, reading scores of their low-income peers decline about two months each year.

"Studies show that the reading loss is cumulative, widening the achievement gap," says Chris O'Keeffe, Foundation vice president for program. "This is something we can fix, and we're working to do that."

In April, the Foundation made a \$44,000 grant to fund four new sites for the Summer Learning Initiative, a proven, research-based program that the United Way of Central Massachusetts has sponsored since 2010.

By joining the United Way as co-funder, the Foundation enabled Family Services of Central Massachusetts, which runs the K-3 program,

to nearly double its reach. This summer, a total of 11 sites served more than 1,000 children.

Providing recreational language arts learning, the program also builds in assessments. On average, 80 percent of participants avoid summer learning loss and about 60 percent improve literacy scores.

Each site gains a literacy coach—an elementary school teacher—who works with all staff, from the director to counselors, to integrate the program's curriculum of literacy activities throughout each child's entire day.

"Staff learn to conduct story time, games, and projects in science, nature and the arts, all with a fun literacy component," says Shirley Taylor, program coordinator of Family Services. "Kids write in journals after field trips and enjoy reading library selections as well as downloadable books from A-Z Learning."

Joanne Gravell, Family Services program director, sees the expansion as a turning point in a citywide response to learning loss.

"We've added drop-in recreation centers at two public housing complexes," says Joanne. "Some staff are English language learners and have their own reading challenges. Our expanded pool of coaches and sites all support one another and learn together. Along with the Worcester Reads campaign, we're broadening awareness of the need to keep up summer learning."



### Collaborating with the Summer Learning Initiative

"I never knew reading could be so much fun," a five-year-old told me when I visited her program site, where the Summer Learning Initiative turns summer into a season to learn rather than to slide back.

Combining forces and funding, the Foundation and the United Way are scaling up this program. As our region's two largest private grantmakers, we're also partnering to address other gaps facing kids during their first five years of school. Together, we will work with our community to increase graduation rates and give all of our kids better futures.

*Tim Garvin, President and CEO,  
 United Way of Central Massachusetts*

## Scholarship Reception

**Honoring 2015 scholarship recipients as well as donors and selection committee volunteers, the Foundation hosted its annual scholarship reception on June 24 at Clark University's Campus Center.**

Foundation CEO Ann Lisi welcomed more than 200 guests, and Andrea Garry, Assumption College '15, congratulated the students. "Only 20 percent of applicants are awarded scholarships, so take a moment to be proud of yourselves," said Andrea, past recipient of a Laurie C. Tinsley Scholarship and a founder of the Alumni Network, whose projects include fundraising for the Class of Tomorrow Scholarship Fund.

As the evening concluded, donors and scholarship recipients gathered on stage for a round of applause. "So many people are touched by each award," says Scholarship Program Manager Beckley Schowalter. "Our reception celebrates all of these people."

In 2015, the Foundation awarded 414 scholarships totaling \$616,650. The total awarded since 1978 is \$9.3 million.



*Kyrach Altman, George Washington University '19, with Joycelyn Augustus, founder of the Dennis Elroy Barry Memorial Scholarship Fund*



*Nancy Johnson, PhD, of the Worcester Woman's Club with scholarship recipients Samuel Acheampong, Jose Reyes and Yen Nguyen*

## Cohort of Young Professionals Inaugurates Leadership Worcester 2016

PHOTO: CHELSEA GREER/MORE



*Young professionals are preparing for influential civic roles through Leadership Worcester.*

**D**eveloping a new generation of civic leaders, the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Foundation have inaugurated their joint program, Leadership Worcester. Chosen through a competitive process, its first participants, an all-volunteer cohort of 25 young professionals, represent diverse backgrounds and a spectrum of industries.

Participants will gain the skills to envision and guide far-reaching change during the nine-month program, which began with an overnight retreat. "During their year together," says Foundation CEO Ann T. Lisi, "these young people will help each other prepare to shape the future of our community."

## Estate Planning: Bringing Philanthropy into the Conversation

Since its start 40 years ago, the Foundation has been a trusted resource for donors and their advisors. When counseling clients, advisors such as attorney Michael D. Brockelman find that the Foundation can offer people valuable guidance in achieving both philanthropic and financial goals.

"When meeting clients to do an estate plan," says Mike, "as we conclude, if they haven't already brought it up, I ask if they've considered charities as beneficiaries. If clients have significant wealth, I may point out that they have an opportunity to make a real difference."

Individuals and families may be considering a planned approach to philanthropy for the first time, notes Mike, who while leading Bowditch & Dewey's estate, tax and financial practice area from 1990 to 2005 also served as a board member, chair of discretionary committee and president.

"The Foundation is a great resource for people who have a charitable desire—such as to create a scholarship or advance a cure—but don't know how to fulfill it," says Mike. "I might suggest that they look into creating a fund at the Foundation, which can advise them on options to achieve their goals, administer the fund, and make annual awards."

Mike is a Foundation corporator and a founding member of its Professional Advisors Network, a forum for advisors to share best practices on incorporating philanthropy within financial and estate plans.

Mike's volunteer roles with the Foundation continue a tradition that his firm began in the '70s. Back then, senior

partners Robert S. Bowditch and Henry B. Dewey were among the first attorneys to recommend the Foundation, then a brand-new model of citizen-run philanthropy. Now starting its fifth decade, the Foundation has proven its merit as a source of highly regarded philanthropic services and community expertise.

"When developing an estate plan, a client may express interest in leaving a legacy that benefits cherished causes as well as loved ones," says Mike. "The Foundation can be a vehicle to achieve both goals through its varied planned giving options. As members of the Foundation's Acorn Society, my wife and I have created a bequest that will enable us to keep giving long after we're gone."

"When clients consider what they really want to accomplish," Mike concludes, "their desires often involve making a lasting impact. And many times, these desires lead them to the Foundation."



PHOTO: OLD STURBRIDGE VILLAGE

*"We appreciate the flexibility and knowledge of Foundation staff and the caliber of its leadership," says Michael Brockelman, who with his wife Mary Ann joined the Acorn Society by stating their intent to make a bequest that will benefit a Foundation fund.*

## YCI Begins 16th Year of Engaging Teens as Grantmakers

The Foundation's Youth for Community Improvement (YCI) program kicked off its 16th year on September 19th with a retreat at Community Harvest Project in North Grafton.

Meeting every Wednesday through December 9th, YCI members conduct an entire grantmaking process, from crafting a request for proposals to reviewing responses and selecting grantees. The group distributes about \$25,000 to local nonprofits.

"After all the debating is over and nonprofits get the money they need, it's very satisfying," says Lillian Cain, a junior at Massachusetts Academy. "We've learned how to listen, speak out, and consider everyone's ideas."

"At first, it's hard," says Ronald Peña, a junior at St. John's High School. "We often don't agree. It gets messy. But the process works. As a group, we make good decisions."

Now in their second year of YCI, Lillian and Ronald will mentor newcomers under the guidance of YCI Coordinator Amy Mosher Berry. "Teens gain essential life skills such as responsibility, communication and team work," says Amy, "while making a positive difference in our community."



*YCI engages Worcester area high school students in philanthropy.*



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*Grants from the Helen A. and Robert S. Bowditch Fund strengthen educational opportunities for children and young people.*

## Still Giving: Helen and Robert Bowditch

Community service and family life mingled in the home of Helen and Robert Bowditch throughout their 62 years of marriage. Bob, a prominent attorney and senior partner at Bowditch & Dewey, was also a vigorous civic leader. An ardent advocate of public education, Helen was elected to eight consecutive terms on the School Committee. The couple sent their children to public schools and for many years provided free room and board to two Worcester Polytechnic

Institute students at their rambling Victorian house near Elm Park.

"The students were part of the family," says Sally Bowditch, the youngest of five siblings. "People from all walks of life were constantly

visiting and my mother's kitchen table was the scene of many a lively conversation. Our house was a meeting place of democracy in action."

In 1990, the couple created the Robert S. and Helen A. Bowditch Education Fund with the Foundation. Their field of interest fund improves education and opportunities for children and young adults in Worcester. Its grants have helped launch and sustain such critical programs as Tenacity Worcester; the Clemente Course in the Humanities; and Bancroft School's Worcester Partnership program with Elm Park School. "Grants aren't tied to traditional education programs," says Sally. "My parents felt that learning was broader than the classroom. They believed that a good education gives people a better chance to overcome obstacles and do what they care about."

The Foundation continues to fund what Bob and Helen care about, and always will.

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**OUR MISSION:** To enhance our community, now and in the future, through philanthropic leadership

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