

# THE ACORN



NEWS FROM THE GREATER WORCESTER COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



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## COMMUNITY LEADERS UNITE TO FOSTER DIVERSITY THROUGH INCLUSION INITIATIVE

Worcester has been home to many ethnic groups for generations. The Foundation's Inclusion Initiative is engaging community leaders in programs that mine this diversity to make Worcester a stronger city.

Foundation president Mike Brockelman started the Initiative by hosting a meeting of nonprofit, business and education leaders at his Bowditch & Dewey office in June 2002. They agreed on the need to foster a spirit of inclusion and respect for diversity and proposed ideas to make the city a more welcoming place for people of all backgrounds.

"Participants all felt the same way," says Mike. "It's the right thing to do, and it's good for business. Two ideas stood out: CEOs suggested that we start a recruitment Web site, and get major employers to participate. They brought their HR people on board."

### Diverse Workforce Key to a Welcoming Climate

HR professionals researched best practices in minority recruitment and retention. Their meetings included visits to the Centro Las Americas workforce development center and Fleet Bank's diversity program.

On July 1, the Inclusion Initiative participants launched a new Web site, [www.Diversity-Jobs-Worcester.com](http://www.Diversity-Jobs-Worcester.com). Designed to help companies attract people of color, the site invites job seekers to browse job openings, post resumes and join e-mail lists. Employers advertise their positions for a small fee. A Foundation mini-grant of \$2,500 funded development of the

site, which displays the logos of corporate sponsors. The HR group will introduce the site through its Human Resource Management Association.

### Fostering a Network

The Initiative is fostering the development of an African-American Network, an informal group of civic leaders and employers who are working to increase local opportunities for people of color. The Network has been meeting to develop programs that can advance this goal, such as social gatherings for newcomers, a resource directory and action groups.

"The Foundation has engaged the broader community in the Inclusion Initiative, which is so critical to the goals of all participants," says Carlton Watson, executive director of the Henry Lee Willis Community Center. "We all recognize that we can't be committed to the betterment of the city and not address this challenge. The Initiative goes beyond talking about it. Together, we're taking action."

The Inclusion Initiative will continue to extend to the city's Latino and Southeast Asian communities. "We'll take the same approach," says Mike. "We'll meet with the community leaders, get good ideas and help to implement them."

## THREE-STATE COLLABORATIVE CREATES EXECUTIVE TRANSITIONS PROGRAM



Gail T. Randall helped establish a New England partnership

A nonprofit organization faces risks as well as opportunities when its leader moves on. A system of supports can help the organization capitalize on the opportunities and minimize the risks created by a change in leadership. Yet few nonprofits have such a structure in place.

As reported in the last issue of *The Acorn*, a 2003 survey of nonprofit leaders in Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island found that 71 percent of the more than 803 respondents expect to leave within five years. But only 12 percent of these organizations had an executive transition plan.

### Boards Can Tap New Resource for Transition Help

"Now, thanks to this collaboration, nonprofits in our region have access to proven transition-planning processes and resources," says Gail Randall, director of the Foundation's Nonprofit Support Center. In 2002, she led the formation of the New England Executive Transitions Partnership, a collaborative of 14 funding organizations in Southern New England.

The Partnership selected Third Sector New England (TSNE) in Boston to develop and run an executive transition support system under its guidance. TSNE hired a program manager and engaged CompassPoint, a San Francisco center for nonprofit management, to train 50 consultants in transition planning and interim executive placement.

"We couldn't have replicated the CompassPoint model on our own," says Gail. "We did it by bringing together partners throughout the region."



## HOUSE CALLS ON HEALTH CARE: DONORS SEE QUALITY OF LOCAL SERVICES

Striving to expand access for vulnerable people, and in keeping with the mission of several of its field-specific funds, the Foundation has awarded a large share of its grants to agencies that help children, families or adults with difficulties to achieve better physical and mental health.

### Seeing First Hand

The Foundation's Distribution Committee hosted a bus tour in June that introduced donors to a host of public health initiatives receiving Foundation support. The half-day event featured four site visits as well as bus talks by program directors.

"We gained a wonderful overview of health-related agencies," says Polly Traina, a donor and former board member. "Each one is essential to some segment of the population, often people with little or no health insurance."

### Programs Respond to Complex Concerns

One stop was the Genesis Club, part of an international mental health movement that emphasizes member empowerment. "People who join the Club are welcome to be members for life yet they are supported to become as independent as possible," says Polly. "They served us a very good

and healthy lunch. The tour confirmed that the Foundation is contributing to well-managed and humanely run services."

The variety and caliber of services also impressed donor Carolyn Dik. "We came away appreciating the value of the different models of delivery," says Carolyn, "from AIDS Project Worcester that started in a little church in Auburn, to Great Brook Valley Health Center, a complete medical center within a housing complex. I was delighted to see programs that we wholeheartedly support do so well."



"I was tremendously impressed with the volume and complexity of the services," says Jack Lund, the first, non-salaried executive director of the Foundation. "And I was overwhelmed by the skill and dedication of the people trying to solve problems."

### Continuing Education

By bringing together both caregivers and donors, the tour served many goals, notes Program Officer Deb Medeiros. "It was interesting for donors to speak directly with providers and to have an exchange about the network of care for people in need," says Deb. She notes that the Distribution Committee is planning to host future learning tours in other areas receiving Foundation grants such as arts programs and after-school services.



(top: Distribution Committee (DC) member Tina Cullina and donors on the bus; clockwise left: Genesis Club member Edmond Richford, DC member Brian Chandley; Dr. Eric Garcia, homeless outreach advocate; John Hess, Great Brook Valley Health Center, DC member John Fray, donor Honee Hess

**ABBY'S HOUSE  
EMPOWERS WOMEN  
WITH WYNNE L. CHASE  
INITIATIVE**

When Arthur Chase established the Foundation's Wynne L. Chase Initiative in 1998 to honor his late wife and her values, he wrote that its purpose was to assist nonprofit organizations "with a track record of empowering women to achieve independence."

Such a nonprofit is Abby's House, a multi-service organization for homeless and battered women and children. Vulnerable women gain stability and strength from Abby's House programs and services. A \$2,500 award from the Wynne L. Chase Initiative to the "Annette Rafferty Survive to Thrive Fund" at Abby's helped five women make positive, enduring changes.

**Direct Aid Helps Women Move Forward**

The award assisted survivors of abuse and newly arrived immigrants overcome obstacles to independence. One gift paid rent for a laid-off Abby's House resident who found a new job that she continues to hold today. The grant also covered one month's rent for a rape victim receiving disability income and undergoing treatment for depression. No longer an SSI recipient, the woman found work and now supports herself.

Another gift enabled an older resident to replace her lost dentures and spared her a five-year wait for MassHealth coverage. When Abby's House found a subsidized apartment for two long-term residents, the grant paid their first month's rent and security deposits.

The Wynne L. Chase Fund has also awarded grants to the Center for Women & Enterprise, the Daybreak Program at the YWCA of Central Massachusetts and the Wynne Chase Scholarship Fund at YOU, Inc.

**BEQUESTS AND  
MEMORIAL FUNDS  
CREATE LEGACIES OF  
CARING**

Numerous families and community groups have been working recently with the Foundation to mark the passing of a loved one while helping others. In other cases, donors and their advisors have worked with the Foundation over time to ensure charitable legacies through estate planning.

These efforts have resulted in the following endowment funds that will provide college scholarships, support for the arts and other benefits. With deep respect and gratitude, we list new or recently expanded memorial funds here.

**Helen A. and Robert S. Bowditch Fund for Youth**, created more than a decade ago by Bob and Helen, two of Worcester's greatest champions for equity and education. Helen's recent death at age 96 generated an outpouring of memorial gifts to honor her service on the School Committee.

**Maureen Henrickson Memorial Scholarship Fund** is being created to honor an exemplary Sutton elementary school teacher who died last year of breast cancer.

**Emil Haddad Memorial Jazz Scholarship Fund** is one way the community will honor the Worcester jazz trumpeter, created after a memorial concert held at Union Blues.



Fairman and Polly Cowan attend our annual meeting with the late Norman L. Sharfman

**Mary Falby Logan and Francis Logan, Jr. Scholarship Fund** came from the estate of Gertrude Falby as a gift to the Boylston Historical Society, which transferred the fund to the Foundation for permanent stewardship.

**Christopher J. Paskell Memorial Fund for Youth Hockey** was created by family and friends after the tragic death of 12-year old Christopher of Sterling.

**Barbara Marks Rothschild Arts and Education Scholarship Fund** is a gift from her family and the community in honor of her outstanding contributions as an art educator.

**Norman L. and Dorothy A. Sharfman Fund** was designed by Mr. Sharfman, a longtime friend of the Foundation who died in July, to help fulfill his hopes for young people.

**Herbert D. Sherwin Memorial Scholarship Fund** was created by Jay Sherwin, a former Foundation program officer, to honor his father's love of education.

**Alexander G. Simonatis Scholarship Fund** is established through the donor's estate to help his townspeople, the residents of Princeton, Massachusetts.

More detailed profiles of the new funds will be presented in our *2004 Annual Report*.

**Annual Appeal Aims Higher As Foundation Begins 30th Year**

Reaching out to its friends and supporters, the Foundation hopes to raise \$100,000 this year to enhance its operating fund. Previous appeals have targeted a goal of \$40,000.

"As the community's foundation, we are performing critical functions that help bring vitality to greater Worcester," says Mike Brockelman, Foundation president and chairman of the board. "Our grants and nonprofit support programs have region-wide impact." The Foundation's total asset base is expected to reach \$100 million in the near future, which Mike describes as "a major milestone, enabling us to do even more for our community."



**Pam Keogh and Tony Wiczorek lead the staff tech team**

**Making Smart Investments**

Now completing the first of a two-semester internship at the Foundation, Tony is already simplifying the complexities of multiple technologies for the staff. "I'll be helping a committee explore ways to use the internet better for the nonprofits as a whole, and I'm developing a staff manual on various tech protocols," says Tony, whose supervisor at the Foundation is Finance Officer Pam Keogh. He manages the Foundation's web site updates and has helped the staff "tech team" select a replacement printer, an LCD for the training center and other hardware.

Tony looks forward to learning more about the challenges of technology planning within nonprofits. "Nonprofits have to be especially smart when they spend money," says Tony. "I'm interested in how a foundation's technology investments can translate into even better service for the community."

**WPI Intern Simplifies the Complexities of Information Technology**

The Foundation offers internships that engage the talents of students at Worcester's world-renowned educational institutions, including the Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI).

At WPI, seniors must complete a Major Qualifying Project in a non-academic setting. While many of his classmates chose internships in engineering and corporate environments, WPI Senior Tony Wiczorek had other ideas.

"I'm attracted to nonprofits," says Tony, who is majoring in technical, scientific and professional communications with a concentration in computer science.

**WHO WE ARE, AND WHAT WE DO**

The Greater Worcester Community Foundation is a grant maker, a resource for philanthropy and a community builder. It was founded in 1975 by local citizens who envisioned a coordinated endowment as a means to build a cohesive and vibrant community and to respond to changing conditions.

Now, according to the Council on Foundations, there are more than 700 community foundations in the U.S. and over 1200 in the world.

In 29 years, the Greater Worcester Community Foundation has awarded \$41 million to cultural, service and civic organizations and has built a charitable endowment exceeding \$95 million in over 300 named funds. We provide seed capital and ongoing support to local agencies; college scholarships to area students; and a way for donors to make a positive difference in their communities.

For more, please visit our website [www.greaterworcester.org](http://www.greaterworcester.org).

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## YOUTH FOR COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT: A PROVEN PROGRAM GROWS

Now in its sixth year, Youth for Community Improvement (YCI) will again bring together a group of teenagers for a hands-on experience in grant making.

High-school students from diverse ethnic and economic backgrounds will learn about philanthropy and develop leadership skills as they distribute \$30,000. These funds comprise \$15,000 from the Massachusetts Environmental Trust and \$15,000 from the Community Foundation's discretionary funds.

### Compressed Program Intensifies Experience

YCI members will meet twice a

month from January through May 2005 and attend a two-day retreat.

"This year, the group will be asked to focus right away on three issues of their choice," says Program Officer Deb Medeiros, YCI supervisor, "and we've compressed the age range of participants so that now it's just for 10th, 11th and 12th graders. We've also shortened the program timeframe by two months. Based on member feedback and discussion with leaders, we decided to provide a more intensive experience."

Kristie Smith, a graduate student at Clark University and former Upward Bound Project Specialist, was hired as YCI Coordinator and has been working with schools and community organizations to recruit 15 students for this year's program.



Kristie N. Smith to coordinate youth grantmakers

### Learning through Building Consensus

Like Distribution Committee members, YCI participants learn from the consensus-building process, notes Ross Dik, a Foundation board member.

"This experience makes you talk about your biases and learn from others to reach the best decisions. In this case, it's the teens' program, run their way, and they do a tremendous job."



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