

theSteward

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ECAD service dog in training practices assisting with shopping chores.

Educated Canines Lend a Helping Paw

At the Educated Canines Assisting with Disabilities' (ECAD) facility in Winchester nine tan and black retriever puppies sleep soundly, tangled together in a plush pillow-lined box. Their mother, a young black retriever with welcoming eyes keeps watch over them from her own overstuffed bed by their side. She will mother three litters before retiring to her adopted home. Her puppies will grow up to change lives.

At just four weeks, ECAD puppies are already prepping for a life of service. Volunteers handle them gently multiple times daily, so they grow comfortable with human touch. In just a few more weeks, these sleepy pups will nudge a light switch attached to a small board with their noses, learning the action and the command "on" and "off." During the first two years of their lives, they will work with trainers five days a week to learn at least 89 commands, such as "get the phone." They will learn to get help when someone collapses, to "anchor" a panicking child, to provide a physical barrier in stressful situations, and to retrieve objects and medications. Only when they have mastered all 89 commands will they meet their person and begin their one-on-one training.

Because of Juliet

ECAD began in 1995. Founders Lu and Dale Picard were living in West Granby where they managed a store. Lu's father, who recently had retired, suffered a sudden and debilitating stroke. Depressed and unresponsive to therapies, he didn't want to depend on others, and he refused to move into a nursing home. Lu and Dale welcomed him into their home knowing that it would be difficult to manage their business and provide the care he needed. After a few days, Lu noticed that her dog, Juliet, had taken up residency on the couch next to her father. The two had formed a special bond, and Lu had an idea.

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Edward Diskavich – A Legacy of Education

Edward Diskavich lived a quiet life in a small home on Beverly Rd. in Torrington. He enjoyed a long life, passing away at the age of 94. A financially successful man, he enjoyed living modestly, and managing his investments. But his greatest achievement, his legacy, was his investment in the future of Northwest Connecticut.

Through his estate planning, Mr. Diskavich donated his body to Yale School of Medicine for research and education. His estate, he gave to the future of the Northwest Corner by establishing two endowed funds with the Community Foundation, a scholarship fund and a discretionary fund.

The Edward W. Diskavich Scholarship Fund provides annual scholarships to graduates of Oliver Wolcott Technical High School. In 2016-2017, the Fund awarded \$11,750 to 20 Northwest Corner students pursuing college degrees in fields including mechanical engineering, biomedical sciences, and education.

The Edward W. Diskavich Fund provides grants annually to nonprofits in the Northwest Corner. Grants from the Fund will support Northwest Corner nonprofits indefinitely. In 2017, the Fund supported the Winsted Senior Center and Senior Enrichment Program in its efforts to make the senior center a more welcoming, comfortable, and safe place.

Torrington Historical Society, Donors Bring Local Landmarks to Light

Tucked within and proudly sitting atop the rolling hills of Litchfield County are antique landmarks and historical treasures, many we drive or walk by every day, others bygone gems hidden just out of view of our daily travels.



Seven Hearths of Kent (above) and Gunn Memorial Library of Kent (below) are among hundreds of historical landmarks featured in *Treasures of the Litchfield Hills*.



The Torrington Historical Society, through a grant from the **Carlton D. Fyler and Jenny R. Fyler Fund**, worked with Local historian William Hosley to bring these historical sites into focus through *Treasures of the Litchfield Hills*, a collection of videos that highlight and provide historical context to Litchfield County landmarks. The resulting project is three short videos that spotlight the region's beauty and history for locals and tourists alike.

"I bet there isn't anyone who's grown up here who knows about everything in these videos," said William Hosley. "It's not just the weekenders who may be surprised by special places that are new to them."

"*Treasures of the Litchfield Hills* demonstrates how our varied attractions combine to make the region a destination for tourists," said Mark McEachern, executive director of the Torrington Historical Society.

"The Community Foundation was critical in bringing the project to fruition. This project and so many others highlight the Foundation's continuing efforts to improve the quality of life in our area."

View *Treasures of the Litchfield Hills* at www.northwestcf.org/treasures

Women & Girls Fund Donors Champion Financial Independence

Twenty years ago a group of visionary Northwest Corner women gathered together to create a giving circle for women and girls because they wanted to support the “real-life” needs of women in Northwest Connecticut. The plan was simple. Giving circle members gave a set amount every year, and every year they voted to award one or two grants to organizations that improved life for women and girls in the Northwest Corner. The grants varied in focus and scope: arts, domestic-violence recovery, leadership, education.



2017 Women & Girls Fund Committee Members from (left to right) Katherine Kinane, Lesa Vanotti, Kathleen Weinstein, Barbara Dughi, Mandy Hill, Marie Wallace, Judi Armstrong, Maria Gonzalez (seated left to right) Sandra Zielinski, Kathy Minck, Joanne Borduas (Rachel Tway-Grant, Dolores Raimo, Roberta Willis not pictured)

That initial group of women could not have imagined the political and economic climate that would surface in the next two decades, nor could they envision the positive impact their philanthropic impulse would have on the long-term financial stability of women and girls in Northwest Connecticut.

From Challenge to Opportunity

In 2014, with the support of the Community Foundation, the Women & Girls Fund published *From Challenge to Opportunity: A Report on the Status of Women & Girls in Northwest Connecticut*. The report revealed that women in Northwest

Connecticut are facing formidable economic challenges, and outlined the need for a robust Women & Girls Fund in our communities, a Fund focused on supporting and empowering women to obtain an education and to develop financial independence.

- Of the 4,400 female headed households in the Northwest Corner, 38 percent with children under the age of 18 are living in poverty
- Female headed households in Litchfield County with children under the age of 18 earn 68 cents for every dollar their male counterpart earns
- Young Northwest Corner women seek higher education, but 43% are derailed by a pregnancy, sexual assault, or financial difficulties

Read From *Challenge to Opportunity: A Report on the Status of Women & Girls* at www.northwestcf.org/womenandgirls

“When we looked at the data, we knew we needed to award grants that work to encourage girls to choose lucrative careers, address the challenges that derail their education and offer support to women whose careers and education have been disrupted, so they can successfully provide for their families,” said Barbara Dughi, Women & Girls Fund Board Chair.

Blazing a Trail to Financial Security

Since 2014, The Women & Girls Fund has actively worked to meet that challenge. An endowed fund supported by local women, and led by an all-female Board of Directors who live and work in Northwest Connecticut, committee members and volunteers have been raising awareness and donations through annual fundraisers and appeals, and passing those donations on through grants for programs and capital needs with a focus on promoting economic self-sufficiency for women and girls through education, financial literacy and social services.

Grants provide daycare scholarships and address transportation challenges that keep women from completing their education and maintaining employment, and support and encourage career development through leadership skills development and career planning, and hard skills, such as resume writing and interview preparation.

Women & Girls Fund Grants

- \$15,500 in daycare and summer camp scholarships for single working mothers through Kent Education Center & Nursery School, LARC’s Camp MOE, and Winsted Area Child Care Center
- \$5,700 in support of programs that assist working women with tuition needs, and employment-related wardrobe and transportation needs through Prime Time House, Women’s Support Services, and Mental Health Connecticut
- \$14,000 in support of internships, career planning, and professional skills development programs for women and girls through Bakerville Library, Housatonic Youth Service Bureau, Community Health & Wellness Center of Greater Torrington, New Opportunities, Prime Time House, and Susan B. Anthony Project
- \$14,760 in support of programs that teach positive body image, assertiveness and positive self-esteem, and promote leadership to young girls through Explorations Charter School, Susan B. Anthony Project, McCall Center for Behavioral Health, Oliver Wolcott Technical High School, The Gilbert School, and EDAdvance

“Women are providers for themselves and for their families,” said Barbara. “As providers, women need access to high-quality childcare and reliable transportation to pursue an education and manage their careers.”

“The support of the Community Foundation and the collective donations from women in our communities is the lifeblood of The Women & Girls Fund, and a lifeline to many women struggling to lift themselves out of poverty.”

“Donations enable the Fund to award the grants that empower women—improve their lives and the lives of their children, and create lasting positive change in our communities.”



Women from the Latina Women’s Association at New Opportunities attended a day long workshop exploring educational and employment opportunities and financial planning.

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Organizations Make Good Use of New Space

In May of 2017, Community Foundation offices moved from 32 City Hall Ave. in Torrington to 33 East Main Street in Torrington. Since then, nonprofits from across the Northwest Corner have been taking advantage of the Community Foundation’s enhanced meeting space and upgraded technologies—holding board meetings, educational events, and convening on shared issues, most recently:

- Connecticut Food Bank
- Foundation for Community Health

- Torrington Food Collaborative
 - United Nations Association of Connecticut
- The Community Foundation’s new office space features two meeting rooms available to nonprofits.
- The large conference room seats more than 20 people and features a projector system that enables presenters to share materials from their laptop or mobile device. The smaller conference room seats about eight and is ideal for small meetings or a just quiet place to collaborate.

“Nonprofit staff and volunteers have always been welcome at the Community Foundation,” said Guy Rovezzi, Community Foundation President.

“Our new space provides even more opportunity to bring together nonprofits and community leaders to address challenges in our Northwest Corner.”

For more information visit www.northwestcf.org/nonprofitresources

What matters to you? Tell us at northwestcf.org/contact

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Educated Canines

After visiting a local facility that trained guide dogs, Lu came home with a harness for Juliet and a plan. For three weeks, she worked with Juliet in the Picard's garage, teaching Juliet to pull on command. Then, she brought Juliet into the house and backed her up to the couch. Lu's father grabbed Juliet's harness. On command, Juliet pulled him to his feet.

"His whole demeanor changed when Juliet pulled him off of that couch," said Dale. "He grabbed on to his walker, and he walked all over the house."

The Picards continued to work with Juliet, teaching her how to turn lights on and off and retrieve items. She became a true ability partner, enabling Lu's father to live independently for years.



ECAD service dog in training practices assisting with daily chores.

After experiencing firsthand what Juliet had done for Lu's father, the Picards felt a calling to help others. They converted their garage into a small kennel and began adopting dogs from local animal shelters and training them as service dogs.

"It felt completely natural," said Dale. "We both grew up interacting with animals. They want to do what we ask them to do; we just need to communicate with them."

Lu was awarded a scholarship to attend a service-dog training program in California. While she was away, Dale completed the necessary paperwork to establish ECAD as a nonprofit. For years, ECAD worked with residential day schools for children with intellectual disabilities. The Picards taught special needs children how to train dogs to respond to commands and the dogs encouraged the children's communication development, increased their confidence and lowered anxiety, so they could focus on learning.

"The Community Foundation has been a great partner in our success and the success of our clients and their dogs."

The Picards continued to adopt and train dogs from local shelters, but with 10 out of 13 adopted dogs on average unable to meet their training standards, and a strong demand for their service dogs, they knew they would need to breed dogs. They adopted a retriever puppy and when she reached maturity, the ECAD breeding program began.

At Home in Winchester

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, school districts began integrating special needs children into typical classrooms and the residential training schools that survived cut much of their programming. Dale drew up plans to build a

facility in Connecticut to focus on providing highly trained dogs to disabled children and adults. The results of that plan is the ECAD facility in Winchester, a facility that enables ECAD to breed, raise and train service dogs that assist with more than 50 different disabilities within three programs:

Open Doors dogs assist with daily tasks, such as laundry and shopping.

Canine Magic dogs assist autistic children with social, emotional and cognitive development and "anchor" children who are prone to run away.

Project Heal dogs ease symptoms associated with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury and assist with long-term physical injuries.

In addition to these program, ECAD trains facility dogs that work in hospitals, nursing homes, and courthouses, training and placing 20 or more educated canines a year.

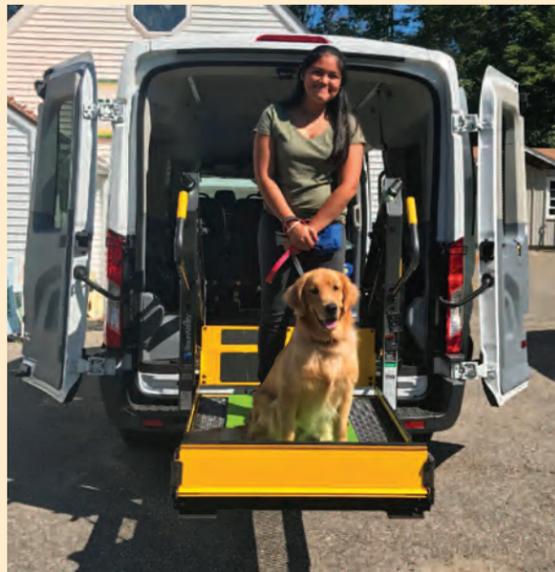
"We live our motto," said Dale. "Until there's a cure, there's a dog."

Donors Help Provide for Independence – Cold Noses and Big Hearts

By 2015 demand for ECAD's dogs was growing quicker than staff and volunteers could provide dogs. ECAD staff reached out to the Community Foundation requesting a grant for needed appliances to help train puppies.

The burgeoning nonprofit was awarded \$4,000 through the **Marion Wm. & Alice Edwards Fund** to upgrade appliances, including a washing machine, dryer, and dishwasher used by ECAD staff and volunteers in the care of service-dogs-in-training and in the training of the dogs. *Watch ECAD service dogs use their new dryer at www.northwestcf.org/ecad*

As word spread about ECAD dogs, the demand continued to grow. By 2016, ECAD staff knew they needed to expand their facility. They launched a capital campaign to do just that, and again, they reached out to the Community Foundation.



ECAD service dog and volunteer demonstrate the wheelchair lift on their newly purchased van.

ECAD was awarded \$100,000 through two grants from the **Draper Foundation Fund** in support of renovations, including a new Canine Education and Wellness Center, which provides canine housing and training, rooms to host clients, and staff offices, and the purchase of a new handicap accessible van to transport clients to public areas for training with their service dogs.

"Providing a comfortable place for our clients to stay as they get to know their service dog and transportation to shops and facilities where clients and their dogs can work together in the final weeks of training is a crucial component of what we do here at ECAD," said Dale Picard, ECAD founder.

"The Community Foundation has been a great partner in our success and the success of our clients and their dogs."

Be What's Possible...



Bradford Hoar

The best way to predict the future is to create it. By working with your advisor to establish a field-of-interest fund, support specific nonprofits through a designated fund, or support the community you love through a discretionary fund, you can affect positive change and create a positive present far into the future.

Working with your advisor and the Community Foundation, you can include language in your will or trust specifying that a gift be made to the Northwest Connecticut Community Foundation as part of your estate plan. You can establish a fund by giving:

- a percentage of your estate
- a specific dollar amount or asset
- the balance or remainder of your estate

For more information, contact Bradford Hoar, VP of Philanthropic Services at bhoar@northwestcf.org or (860) 626-1245.

Women & Girls Fund CONTINUED from page 3

Coding for a Cause: Random Hacks of Kindness

Each spring, The Women & Girls Fund in collaboration with Rhok, Jr. hosts a "hackathon" for social good with girls in grades 4th-8th.



PHOTO BY JOHN SULLIVAN

2017 Random Hacks of Kindness participant builds an app for CAFTA

Volunteer mentors from local high schools work with younger girls to devise smartphone applications that address a range of problems facing local nonprofits.

"Rhok brings together local organizations that serve women and girls to raise awareness in the community of available resources, and it exposes girls to the joy of computer programming, presenting them with the possibility of pursuing a STEM-related career, which can more than double their earning potential," said Barbara Dughi, Women & Girls Fund Board Chair.

View photos of the 2017 Rhok event at www.northwestcf.org/rhok

Beneath the Surface: The Opioid Epidemic in Northwest Connecticut



In partnership with the Foundation for Community Health, Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation and McCall Center for Behavioral Health, the Community Foundation has published *Beneath the Surface: The Opioid Epidemic in Northwest Connecticut*.

The Report uncovers the facts surrounding the epidemic of opioid abuse in the Northwest Corner and recommends actions our community can take to address the growing problem of addiction in rural Connecticut.

Read *Beneath the Surface: The Opioid Epidemic in Northwest Connecticut* at www.northwestcf.org/opioid

Also online...

The Women & Girls Fund Host Comedic Luncheon Fundraiser: *The Importance of Laughter: Why we need more...and how to get it*

Gina Barreca, academic, humorist and author of *If You Lean In, Will Men Just Look Down Your Blouse? Questions and Thoughts for Loud, Smart Women* is coming to the Northwest Corner for a humor-filled luncheon and fundraiser for the Women & Girls Fund.

Learn more at www.northwestcf.org/womenandgirls

Draper Foundation Fund awards \$665,565 to Local Nonprofits

The Draper Foundation Fund recently awarded area nonprofits \$665,565. \$546,750 was awarded to 19 designated nonprofits and \$118,815 was awarded in donor-advised grants to nonprofits that provide essential programs and services for residents of Northwest Connecticut.

Read more at www.northwestcf.org/draper2017

2017 LEAP Graduates

The Northwest Connecticut Community Foundation and Danosky & Associates, LLC congratulates seven new graduates of the Leadership Enrichment for Advancing Professionals (LEAP) program. The graduates completed an intensive eight-week program designed to build skills in all areas of nonprofit leadership.

Read more www.northwestcf.org/LEAP2017

Local Students Awarded Scholarships

Area students have been awarded \$154,050 in scholarships and awards for the 2017-2018 academic year through funds held at the Northwest Connecticut Community Foundation.

Read more at www.northwestcf.org/2017scholarships

Nonprofits receive \$171,495 in Spring and Summer Discretionary Grants

The Northwest Connecticut Community Foundation has awarded 46 area nonprofit organizations more than \$171,495 during its spring and summer discretionary grant cycles.

Read more at www.northwestcf.org/2017grants

Nonprofit Salary and Compensation Report Released

TSNE MissionWorks has released *Valuing Our Nonprofit Workforce: Compensation and Benefits Survey of Nonprofits in Southern New England and Westchester County, NY*. The findings are available in pdf and searchable database formats.

Learn more at www.northwestcf.org/news/nonprofitsalary

Foundation Focus



Gayle Moraski Named Community Foundation Chairperson

Gayle Moraski has been named Chairperson of the Community Foundation Board of Directors. A lifelong resident of Winchester, Ms. Moraski is vice president of Northwest Community Bank, where she was instrumental in establishing a nationally recognized academic branch program at Northwestern Regional High School. She has served on boards of the United Way of Northwest Connecticut, Wisdom House, and Winchester Historical Society.

Currently treasurer of the American Mural Project, Ms. Moraski helped found the highly successful Tour of Litchfield Hills, an annual bike rally that benefits the Center for Cancer Care Fund.



Adrian Selby Joins the Community Foundation Board of Directors

Adrian Selby of Litchfield has been named to the Board of Directors of the Community Foundation. A successful entertainment executive, Mr. Selby served as managing director of TASCO, a major global production supplier to the live concert industry working with musicians including, The Jacksons, Elton John, Diana Ross, and The Who.

After fifteen years in entertainment production, Mr. Selby launched production company, Aquila Productions. He serves as CEO of the company, which specializes in creating media events for clients, including General Motors, AIMIA, Exelon and Subaru. Adrian resides in Litchfield with his wife, Margaret.

NORTHWEST CONNECTICUT COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

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