

# theSteward

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## Local Area Fund Donor Brings Hope to Storm Victims



An aid worker surveys a Milford home that was damaged by Hurricane Sandy.

PHOTO BY ROBERT ROSE/FEMA

Months after Superstorm Sandy, many Connecticut residents continued to struggle to recover their livelihoods and to provide nutritious food, safe shelter, transportation, clothing, and medical supplies for their families.

In the confusion, a philanthropic family from Northwest Connecticut stepped in to help. Family members advised the Community Foundation to provide a grant for \$50,000 from their anonymous donor-advised fund to assist individuals and families continuing to struggle to recover from the storm.

The Foundation presented the \$50,000 grant to the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut, which was working with the United Way of Southeastern Connecticut to develop a flexible application process for storm victims to apply for financial assistance funds.

“Hurricane Sandy was a financial tipping point into distress for many Connecticut families,” said Alice F. Fitzpatrick, President of the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut. “We were surprised to discover the breadth and depth of hardship triggered by lost wages, even for a brief period of time.”

The advised gift from the Local Area Fund provided support for Connecticut families who worked at fast food restaurants and retail stores and lost weeks of income due to damaged buildings and roads and lost hundreds of dollars worth of groceries due to extended power outages. Many of the recipients were single-parent families without family support in the area. Recipients suffered losses that were not covered by FEMA or personal insurance.

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**“Hurricane Sandy was a financial tipping point into distress for many Connecticut families.”**

## Community Foundation Fund Holders Provided for Amazing Gifts in 2012

In 2012 the Community Foundation of Northwest CT awarded more than \$2.2 million to more than 200 non-profits to support education, access to healthcare, historical preservation, land conservation, arts programs and community development projects. A few highlights from 2012 include the Draper Foundation Fund, which provided \$50,000 to LARC to kick start the capital campaign to raise \$285,000-\$300,000 to complete construction of the lower level of its building on Main St. in Torrington. Once it has been completed, the lower level will consist of 3,500-square feet of program space to house the School to Community Transition Program, which prepares young adults with a range of intellectual and developmental disabilities to successfully transition into adulthood.

The Transition Program is a custom tailored program for students 18-21 years old that emphasizes social, employment and life skill development through strategies including hands-on experimental learning. In addition to the Transition Program, the new space will serve as a meeting room for parent networking.

The Edwin M. and Edith H. Stone Fund provided for a \$4,000.00 grant to support an after-school creative arts education program at the Litchfield Community Center for Litchfield and Region 6 students, in collaboration with the Washington, CT-based After School Arts Program (ASAP).

The Miriam Mason Cable Trust Fund provided \$3,000.00 to support a capital project involving structural repairs to the Harwinton Historical Society’s barn museum, which houses hundreds of artifacts from Harwinton’s past, as well as to the one-room schoolhouse (circa 1840), which has been restored as a living museum for public enjoyment.

The Robert Venn Carr Jr. Fund provided \$3,000 to support the Torrington Community Radio Foundation’s goal to upgrade broadcast equipment used by WAPJ, a nonprofit FM station serving the Greater Torrington area with a variety of commercial-free programs since 1997

The Cancer Care Fund of the Litchfield Hills provided \$205,500 for the treatment of cancer patients at the Cancer Care Center at Charlotte Hungerford Hospital.

## Marion Wm. & Alice Edwards Fund, Mohawk Mountain Provide Warmth for Little Fingers

The Canaan Childcare Center provides daycare to 34 children of working parents in North Canaan, most of whom are low-income families. Nestled in the cold and snowy foothills of the Berkshire Mountains, the area has a poverty rate of 12.9 percent.

Canaan Child Care Director Frances Chapell reached out to the Foundation as the children could not play outside comfortably because they did not have waterproof mittens. Through an End of the Year Grant, made possible by the Marion Wm. & Alice Edwards Fund, the Foundation was able to award the Childcare Center a grant for mittens.

Mohawk Ski Area President Carol Lugar wanted to make sure that the children received high-quality water-proof mittens that would last for several wintry seasons. Rather than allowing for the childcare center to purchase mittens from a large discount store, Lugar provided the ski-quality mittens that the Mohawk Mountain Ski Shop sells at the same price she pays to stock them in the store.

“This is the first year that the children have not complained about cold, wet hands,” said Ms. Chapell. “We go outside every day possible, and this year the children are well equipped.”



Children at the Canaan Childcare Center can now enjoy snowy days on the playground thanks to a grant for water proof mittens from the Marion Wm. & Alice Edwards Fund.



## Mary Coutant, A Legacy of Love and Leadership



*Beloved children's advocate Mary Coutant succumbed to chronic health illness on October 9, 2012, at the age of 71.*

On October 9, 2012, the community of Northwest Connecticut said goodbye to a beloved community leader, a woman revered for her advocacy work, a woman who gave countless hours to improve the lives of children in the community she loved.

Mary Coutant was born Mary Humeston in 1941 in New Haven, the youngest of the six Humeston children. A high-energy athletic young woman, Mary was an active member of the local YMCA, working with the Torrington YMCA as the Women and Girls Secretary and working as a camp counselor at the YMCA Camp Mohawk for Girls each summer.

She earned a degree in psychology from Springfield College in Massachusetts, a school with a strong athletic focus and historical partnership with YMCA USA. In 1998, she established the Winchester Youth Service Bureau, an agency that functions as a case manager for families of at-risk children, helping them to access agencies and resources, so their children experience success at school, at home and in the community.

"Mary was a force for good," Foundation President Guy Rovezzi said. "And her contributions to the welfare of our community, especially where it concerns children, will be felt for generations to come."

Over the course of her life, Mary received the Torrington Rotary Club's Paul Harris Fellowship award; was named Person of the Year by the Torrington UNICO Club; and earned the Chamber of Commerce of

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Northwest Connecticut's Community Leader Award.

In recognition of Mary's contributions to the community, The Mary H. Coutant Fund for the Summer Fun Club was established at the Foundation in 2001. Recently renamed The Mary H. Coutant Fund for Rising Star Camp, the endowment is used to support programs that benefit at-risk children through the Winchester Youth Service Bureau aged 5 to 15 by encouraging healthy choices and goal-setting.

### *Mary Coutant's Legacy Lives at Camp Mohawk*

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***"Mary emanated the spirit and energy of Camp Mohawk," said Fran Marchand Camp Mohawk Executive Director.***

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In 1960, Mary Coutant was Mary Humeston, a teenage girl attending Camp Mohawk, a camp for girls nestled among 1,500 acres of state forest in the hills of Northwest Connecticut. As a Counselor in Training (CIT), Mary worked to develop leadership, public speaking, teaching and counseling skills. During her time at Camp Mohawk, she served as assistant waterfront director, senior unit director and eventually led the CIT program. In 1962, she met another fellow camp counselor named Roger Coutant; the two married four years later in 1967.

"Mary emanated the spirit and energy of Camp Mohawk," said Fran Marchand Camp Mohawk Executive Director.

In addition to establishing The Mary H. Coutant Fund for Rising Star Camp, Mary bequeathed seed money to Camp Mohawk for the establishment of a non-restricted fund. The Camp Mohawk Fund will support Camp Mohawk and enable others to continue Mary's legacy by including the Camp in their estate planning.



*In her youth, Mary worked as a Counselor in Training at Camp Mohawk, developing leadership skills, including public speaking, teaching and counseling. She met her husband, Roger Coutant, at the Camp in 1962.*



*Dedicated to public service, Fred Petersen served on the Foundation's Board for eight years. He passed away in October of 2012.*

### **Fred Petersen: Public Servant, Veteran's Advocate, Compassionate Man**

An avid genealogist, sailor, UConn women's basketball fan and active citizen, Fred Petersen was a man of many pursuits, with ample energy to follow wherever his heart led him. Fred's passion for public service and his compassion for others made him the ideal community leader, as his résumé readily proves.

"From firefighter and ambulance driver to auxiliary policeman and Boy Scout leader, dad was active in the community—wherever he was," Mary Elizabeth Whitaker said of her father, who was born and raised in Newport, RI.

Fred's passing on October 9 leaves a void at the Foundation, where he served on the board of directors for eight years, as well as at the countless civic organizations that benefitted from his service. Among those were the Connecticut Heritage

Foundation, which Fred chaired for 10 years, the Connecticut State Library, and the Torrington Area Health District.

A longtime resident of Falls Village, Fred spent much of his career as a financial and business affairs officer at colleges and independent schools in Connecticut, Massachusetts and Michigan. He also served in the Navy and was a lifelong advocate for veterans and those actively serving in the U.S. military.

"Fred was the salt of the earth, and he will be sorely missed," Foundation President Guy Rovezzi said. "His dedication to the Foundation's mission—to promoting the common good—was a model for us to emulate."

## Camp Mohawk and Foundation Fundholders Help Girls Reach Their Potential

For almost 95 years, Camp Mohawk in Litchfield has helped girls and young women from Northwest Conn. and around the world build confidence, hone skills and work toward reaching their potentials. From June 23 – August 17, more than 700 girls arrive at the camp for one or two weeks of activities, including swimming, horseback riding, animal husbandry, arts and sports programs and curriculum that develops their confidence, leadership, communication and teamwork skills.

“Every activity at the Camp has a curriculum,” said Fran Marchand Camp Mohawk Executive Director. “We push our girls and our staff to continue in their personal growth, knowledge and appreciation of themselves. Our expectation is that every girl is going to go home and change the world as a positive force for good in the community.”

Camp activities are geared toward girls learning about themselves and their relationship to their natural environment as well as how to work as a member of a team. Girls work in pairs or in groups, learning to push themselves and support and encourage each other. Every night in the cabins, they sit down for a counselor led non-denominational discussion about values, spirituality and their relationships with their natural environment. Camp counselors then meet with each camper individually on the front porch of the cabin to discuss her day, including any happy experiences, frustrations and comments about activities.

In 2012, 70 campers attended Camp Mohawk using financial scholarships, a number that grows every year. Marchand hopes that number will represent 10 percent of campers by 2015.

***“Our expectation is that every girl is going to go home and change the world as a positive force for good in the community.”***



*Mohawk Campers choose from activities, including swimming, horseback riding, animal husbandry, arts and sports programs.*



*Mohawk Campers are challenged to complete ropes courses, some of which are as high as 35 feet.*

Camp Mohawk staff to use monies wherever they are needed, including new signs for the camp, which is currently underway.

### Providing for Momentum: New Funds Benefit Community

**One Twenty One Fund** – was established as a donor-advised fund supporting charitable scientific, and educational initiatives primarily in Northwest, Connecticut.

**The Litchfield Garden Club Centennial Fund** – was established in honor of the 100th anniversary of the Garden Club’s 1913 founding. The endowed charitable fund supports projects and programs in the greater Litchfield area in the fields of gardening, horticulture, civic beautification, environmental awareness, and historic preservation.

**Camp Mohawk Fund** – was established through a gift from Mary Coutant, a longtime advocate for women and girls and a former Camp Mohawk counselor. The unrestricted fund supports Camp Mohawk, a camp for girls in Litchfield County.



*Drew Harlow, (middle) Litchfield Garden Club president and Garden Club member Susan Magary (right) present a check to Guy Rovezzi, Community Foundation of Northwest Connecticut president, establishing The Litchfield Garden Club Centennial Fund.*



*Mohawk Campers spend a lot of time getting to know each other through group activity and counselor-led conversations. They build friendships that last well into adulthood.*

**Local Area Fund Donor Brings Hope to Storm Victims** *continued from front cover*

“The Local Area Fund is a great example of the positive impact of local philanthropy,” said Guy Rovezzi, president of The Community Foundation of Northwest Connecticut. “Many nonprofits supporting our community could not exist without the generosity of Litchfield county fundholders and donors like those who established the Local Area Fund.

“But, when our neighbors have a great need, such as in the case of an unavoidable disaster, there is a natural desire to reach beyond our region to assist.” Since the initial \$50,000 grant, the family has provided for another \$50,000 to continue to restore hope for those struggling to recover.



*Aid workers tour Bridgeport's Seaside Park in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy.*

PHOTO BY MARILEE CALIENDO/FEMA

The Local Area Fund was established in 2002 as an anonymous donor-advised fund. The Fund supports Litchfield county nonprofit organizations, such as The Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, the Yankee Institute for Public Policy, Foothills Visiting Nurse and Homecare and The Housatonic Valley Association. Since its inception, the Fund has provided more than \$900,000 to 24 Litchfield County non-profits supporting conservation, emergency services, health care, medical research, and the arts.



*A storm-damaged home in Milford*

PHOTO BY MARILEE CALIENDO/FEMA

**Foundation Focus – Nicole Carlson Easley**

Nicole joined the Foundation in January of 2013. Nicole oversees Foundation communications, including print and electronic publications, cfnwct.org management, public relations and social media development. A native of Washington, Conn., Nicole is a graduate of the University of South Carolina. She has managed non-profit publications and communications for more than 13 years, including managing communications for financial-related services provided to Hurricane Katrina victims by the members of the Florida Institute of CPAs; public relations and promotion of the American Dental Association's Give Kids a Smile outreach program; and a nationwide electric utility disaster-preparation and response program. Nicole was a founding member of Capitol ARK/ECAH Animals, a successful grassroots effort to create a no-kill environment for domestic animals in Florida's capital city. She has written and contributed to several books, including Savannah Folklore and The Florida Institute of CPAs, the history of accountancy in Florida.



**PHILANTHROPY FACTS:**

**American Tax Payer Relief Act: Charitable IRA Rollover Extended Through 2013**

As part of the American Tax Payer Relief Act, which was enacted on January 2, 2013, investors who are aged 70 and a half and older may donate up to \$100,000 each year from their Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) to public charities without counting the distributions as taxable income. Contributions made from IRAs can help reduce federal income tax on IRA payouts and decrease taxable income, reducing donors' state taxes. Transfers of up to \$100,000 can be provided to a Community Foundation fund tax free until December 31, 2013.

**Charitable Giving is Once Again on the Rise**

According to a survey by the Blackbaud Index of Charitable Giving, charitable giving in the United States rose 1.7 percent in 2012, and online giving grew by 10.7 percent on a year over year basis.

**The Impact of an Endowment**

Did you know? An endowed gift of \$200,000, earning eight percent interest annually and distributing \$10,000 per year in grants to qualifying non-profits, in 20 years will grow to \$361,222 and distribute \$17,535 per year while continuing to grow in principal.



**THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION**  
of NORTHWEST CONNECTICUT

*Here for good.*

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**Be What's Possible**

Our commitment to the vitality of northwest Connecticut is strong, but your ongoing support is what makes good things possible. Together, we're bringing hope and opportunity to those less fortunate; we're ensuring the future of our local libraries, cultural organizations and conservation groups; and we're advancing the educational goals of our youth. We're your Community Foundation—your partner in improving the public good. Thank you for your continued support.

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