

FALL 2016

Maine *Ties*

NEWS FROM THE MAINE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



IN THIS ISSUE:

Listening to the People of Maine, 2 / Philanthropists Focused on the Future, 4
Our Goal: A Better Life in Maine, 6 / New Board Members Reflect on Community, 8
Professional Advisor: Jennifer Richard, 10

LISTENING TO THE PEOPLE OF MAINE

The Maine Community Foundation's mission is to "work with donors and other partners to improve the quality of life for all Maine people." When I became president and CEO a little over a year ago, the foundation's board of directors charged me to help increase the foundation's impact with respect to its mission. To that end, the board, staff, and I set out to explore ways the foundation could deploy resources in key areas in a more catalytic and focused manner.

For the past 10 months, the Maine Community Foundation has listened closely to the people of Maine. We have sought input from peers and critical partners, including our donors and leaders of foundations, numerous for-profit and nonprofit businesses, chambers of commerce, governmental and educational institutions. We have conferred with our county advisors and, through community conversations, have heard from a broad cross section of Maine residents.

We are excited to share the new strategic goals with you here [see back page]. We unveiled the goals at our inaugural summit on November 1, and directly addressed one of them, racial equity, at that same gathering. While community foundation grantmaking already supports these goals (as you'll read elsewhere in this newsletter), we will devote even more financial, human capital, and advocacy resources to them over the next five years.

We will continue to listen to the people of Maine as we develop our work plans in these important goal areas. Research and education will be crucial to our understanding of where and in what ways we can have the greatest impact. We look forward to working with you.

Steve Rowe is president and CEO of the Maine Community Foundation.

*On the cover: Avery Hanna discovers the magic of bubbles at Coastal Kids Preschool in Damariscotta. The school, which opened in 1996, is guided by a vision of equal access to early education for all children.
Photo Thalassa Raasch*



Top: MaineCF President and CEO Steve Rowe facilitates the Lincoln County Community Conversation at the Second Congregational Church in Newcastle. Photo Thalassa Raasch
Bottom, left: Suzanne Crawford, Washington County Committee chair, and Sarah Strickland from the Cobscook Community Learning Center in action at the Washington County Community Conversation in Machias. Photo Faye Mack
Bottom, right: Maine CF Program Officer Laura Lee takes notes during the Oxford County Community Conversation in Bethel. Photo Thalassa Raasch

KNOWING THE NEED

Kristen Lindquist and Paul Doiron are committed to the future of their community.

Up a steep bank from the Megunticook River in Camden stands the modest home of writers Kristen Lindquist and Paul Doiron. They're still rather young, but they've already taken a long view of how their bequest to the Maine Community Foundation could help sustain the place they love.

Lindquist and Doiron were born and raised in Maine. A poet and naturalist, Lindquist is the author of *Transportation* and publishes a daily haiku on her blog, "Book of Days." Doiron, former editor of *Down East*, writes the Mike Bowditch series of crime novels.

Having worked for nonprofits—Lindquist as development director for Coastal Mountains Land Trust, Doiron as head of Maine Writers & Publishers Alliance—they understand the need for philanthropy. As part of the community, they see the need: the Camden Area Food Pantry is just down the block.

"Camden might seem affluent, but go a mile inland, there's a stark divide," says Doiron. At MaineCF's

Knox County Community Conversation in September, he heard a "jarring discordance between the image of Camden as trouble-free and people saying there's so much we need to do."

Lindquist's knowledge of that need has increased through chairing MaineCF's Knox County Committee. "Seeing what projects are being supported helps me to appreciate the value of the Knox County Fund," she says. Work of the committee's volunteer advisors also influenced the direction of their bequest to the fund. "They take their responsibility as grantmakers seriously," she notes, "and are aware of needs across the county."

Expressing love of the place they call home, Lindquist and Doiron feel that their bequest will help sustain and improve the quality of life in Knox County. "It's important that we make a bequest now, even though our estate is small," says Lindquist. "We hope it will be a lot larger years from now," she adds, "but the point is: you don't have to be wealthy to be thinking about a legacy."



*Kristen Lindquist and Paul Doiron on the Megunticook River, just below Seabright Dam. Their props express their passions: binoculars for birding, a fly rod for fishing.
Photo Jim Dugan*



RUTH GRAY: PHOTOGRAPHER AND PHILANTHROPIST

The centenarian from Old Town finds community through giving.

Ruth Gray was born in Old Town in 1916, attended Smith College, and served in World War II with the Red Cross. Early on, she settled on photography as a profession because it would pay for her travels. And travel she did: across the U.S. and around the world, including trips to the Galapagos Islands, Africa, and India.

Gray sold her photos to an agency in New York City, which in turn placed them in *Holiday* and other publications. She also took on local assignments, working with a Bangor-area architect and supplying catalogue photos for the Old Town Canoe Company, which her family owned.

Speaking to visitors at her home in Orono this past summer, Gray recalled developing color photography in the early days. “I made my first color photograph back when you had to make three separate negatives, for the three primary colors, and superimpose them.” It was, she averred, “a tricky business.”

Gray also spoke about her charitable giving. She has provided scholarships to students from Old Town schools for the past 20 years. She has a simple answer to explain her generosity: “because there are so many young ones who can’t afford to go to college.” Her bequest to the Maine Community Foundation will allow Old Town schools to support enhanced educational opportunities for middle-school students. “I think it’s important to get the kids interested in learning as early as possible,” she said.

What does giving mean to Gray? “It gives you a feeling of being a definite part of a community.” She also advises everyone to get as much experience as they can out of life, to enjoy it. One of her favorite sayings? “It’s better to burn out than to rust out.”

*Above: Ruth Gray with one of her photographs at her home in Orono.
Photo Thalassa Raasch*

OUR GOAL: A BETTER LIFE IN MAINE

Over the next five years MaineCF will place a special focus on learning for young children and adult learners; equitable access to opportunities for people of color; independence and dignity for vulnerable older adults; and encouraging entrepreneurial innovation. We are already invested in these areas as illustrated by these stories. Photos by Thalassa Raasch, MaineCF storytelling intern



SUPPORTING OLDER ADULTS

In Rangeley, a respite for seniors

Esther calls it her “day out with the girls”: lively games of dominoes, puzzles, badminton, and shared stories. She’s one of several Rangeley area seniors with diverse needs and abilities who attend the HELP Adult Respite Care Program (HARC), supported by a grant from MaineCF’s Western Mountains Fund. At the end of the half-day session, Esther balks when her ride arrives. HARC’s coordinator, Patricia Langille, persuades her with the gift of a rose that Esther can hold until she returns the next week.



A HEALTHY START

Big strides for little folk

Inspiring success stories abound at Coastal Kids Preschool in Damariscotta, guided by its two-decade vision of equal access for all children. Here’s one: a young learner who arrived at age three couldn’t talk, walk, or eat solid food. Nine months later, he runs on the playground and plays with classmates. The preschool reserves one-third of its slots for Lincoln County children with special needs, regardless of income. With grant support from MaineCF’s Lincoln County Fund, teams of teachers and one-to-one aides create joyful classroom environments that support young learners at all levels, at their own pace.



CONTINUING EDUCATION

A balancing act for biology

Joshua Clukey wants his young daughter to grow up seeing him living a fulfilling life. For now, that means balancing a demanding schedule of parenting and school as he pursues his dream to study biology as a researcher or educator. A James and Marilyn Rockefeller Scholarship for adult learners has allowed Clukey to continue his education at Southern Maine Community College. His loves of biology and Maine have shaped his vision: “The ecosystems surrounding Casco Bay and the Gulf of Maine are stitched into who I am,” he writes. “I am here to stay.”



PUTTING DOWN ROOTS

Somali Bantus, at home on the farm

Maine’s Somali Bantu families have a reason to celebrate: Many have found familiar footing in fields of New Gloucester and Lewiston. The Somali Bantu Community Mutual Assistance Association, a MaineCF People of Color Fund grantee, has helped 66 families rediscover the farming they loved in their homeland – and stretch their food dollars. More than 30 families have plots at the New Gloucester farm owned by Carl and Jan Wilcox, with even more on the waiting list. Harvest Fest marks a successful growing season with music, dancing, food, and a renewed appreciation for their agrarian roots.

A NEW APPROACH

Looking back to grow the future

Albie Barden, seed saver and keeper of corn, cradles ears and stalks with a reverence for the land and its past. He’s one of several growers who are nurturing the return of ancient flint corn, helped in part by a grant from MaineCF’s Western Mountains Fund to the Flint Corn Restoration Project of the Maine Grain Alliance. Its goal: to provide yet another grain product in Maine to boost the economic impact of farmers, millers, and bakers, and help further the rebirth of grain production in Maine.



NEW TO THE BOARD

Susan Hammond and Reza Jalali offer new perspectives on economic development, immigration, and culture.

The Maine Community Foundation Board of Directors has elected two members: Susan Hammond of Orono and Reza Jalali of Falmouth. “With their backgrounds in business, education, and advocacy, Susan and Reza will help expand the board’s vision of what the Maine Community Foundation can accomplish in the years ahead,” said President and CEO Steve Rowe.

A Penobscot Nation tribal member, **Hammond** is a founder and executive director of Four Directions Development Corporation, a Native community-development financial institution that serves Maine’s four Wabanaki tribes. Prior to Four Directions, she worked for the Penobscot tribe in several different capacities, including vocation education coordinator for the Economic Development Department.

Hammond received the Maine Small Business Administration’s Small Business Advocate of

the Year Award in 2003 and two awards from the Opportunity Finance Network/Oweesta Corporation. She holds a B.S. in business administration from the University of Maine.

A longtime resident of Maine, **Jalali** is an immigrant advocate who has taught at Bangor Theological Seminary and the University of Southern Maine. He advises Muslim students at Bowdoin College and directs USM’s Office of Multicultural Student Affairs.

Jalali’s books include *Moon Watchers* (2010), *Homesick Mosque and Other Stories* (2013), and *The Poets and the Assassin* (2015). He was included in “50 in 52 Journey,” a national project to name “Americans who are problem-solvers, idea-generators in their communities, in their cities, and in their states and are moving America forward.”

Opposite, top: Author, educator, and advocate Reza Jalali at the University of Southern Maine where he serves as coordinator of multicultural student affairs. Bottom: Susan Hammond, executive director of Four Directions Development Corporation, in her Orono office. Photos Thalassa Raasch

Asked how their backgrounds have informed what community means to them and how they define it, Hammond and Jalali offered their thoughts:

“As a new immigrant to the U.S. and a new Mainer, my desire to belong was strong. All I wanted was to be accepted and included as a member of the community. On talking to others, I understood most refugees and immigrants calling Maine home wanted the same: to belong and be accepted by the larger community.

This desire mixed with my passion to create safe and welcoming communities—be it at the University of Southern Maine where I provide support to students coming from new Mainer communities, or in Portland, where I advocate for the inclusion of new Mainers who have lost their homes to wars and conflict. They have informed my work in the community, contributing to my efforts to bring visibility to our new neighbors. ”

—Reza Jalali



“I am a Penobscot Nation citizen and have worked most of my adult life for the Wabanaki communities. Prior to my first connection with my tribal community over 30 years ago, I had no strong community ties, having grown up as a military dependent; our community changed every three years upon my father’s new base assignments. My only constant childhood community was my immediate and extended family.

I have found a Native American community to be much more than what one typically considers a community. Its uniqueness lies in the strong cultural traditions, 10,000-year history, indigenous language, ancestral clans and the shared tribal identity of the people in the community. My community, the Penobscot Nation, and its survival are contingent upon our present generation’s vigilant stewardship. ”

—Susan Hammond

USE YOUR EARS FIRST

Jennifer Richard, MaineCF's new director of gift planning, shares insights from her years as a trusts and estates attorney.



Jennifer I. Richard was a trusts and estates attorney at Drummond & Drummond, LLP, in Portland for 20 years prior to joining MaineCF as director of gift planning. She is a graduate of the University of New Hampshire Whittamore School of Business and Economics and the Franklin Pierce Law Center. Richard has served on several boards, including Make-A-Wish Maine, the United Way of Greater Portland Foundation, and the Maine Estate Planning Council. She is currently a member of the Maine Estate Planning Council and continues to be an active volunteer at Make-A-Wish Maine. She also serves on the United Way advisory committee for the Kenneth J. Higgins Scholarship. Richard and her husband, Neal, live in Cumberland with their three children, Gina, Sophie, and Alex.

MaineCF: Working with clients in your former practice, how did the question of charitable giving come up?

Jennifer Richard: As my relationship with clients developed and I earned their trust, I would learn more details about their assets, their businesses, their family values, and lifestyle. I would then feel more comfortable asking more focused questions about whether they supported specific charitable organizations or causes and whether they wanted to support them in a more meaningful way, either now or in the future, through their estate plans.

Not everyone was in a position to support nonprofits; it often depended on their stage in life. Clients without children or other close relatives tended to make charitable giving a high priority. For others, charitable giving became more viable after they helped their children attain a college or graduate degree.

I've had several clients who felt their children either already had enough wealth or would have enough wealth if they inherited a portion of their estate. Their focus then shifted from planning for their children to including them in future charitable gift planning.

MaineCF: What do you wish you had known about the Maine Community Foundation when you were practicing trusts and estates?

Jennifer Richard: I mostly wish I had known the depth of charitable giving expertise that exists at the Maine Community Foundation and the willingness of the staff to help donors make charitable gifts in a simple, fun, and effective way—whether those gifts end up with the community foundation or another organization that is improving the quality of life for Maine people.

MaineCF: What advice would you give to your peers related to charitable giving?

Jennifer Richard: Use your ears first and listen to your clients, ask follow-up questions about their interests – and then listen again. This process will help your clients identify the best strategy for their philanthropic goals and for giving in a way that is most meaningful to them.

MaineCF: You've been in the trusts and estates field for 20 years. What changes have you seen?

Jennifer Richard: The biggest change I witnessed was volatility in federal and Maine income and estate tax laws. This unpredictability made planning difficult at times. For the most part, my clients' decisions over the years were based on their desire to help the organizations or communities they supported. However, some of those decisions also were tax-driven.

It was my practice to first discuss personal planning goals without regard to income and estate tax consequences. Next, I would introduce strategies to meet those goals in the most tax-efficient way.

These strategies usually required some compromise by the client or family member and deviated a bit from the original personal goals. After explaining the various strategies, I let the client choose one with which they were the most comfortable and then would implement that strategy in their estate planning documents. I liked to think of this as the "sleep at night factor," making sure my clients were comfortable with their entire estate plan so they could rest easy.

MaineCF: As you think about your role at the community foundation, how do you hope people might look to you for help?

Jennifer Richard: Donors have a variety of reasons for giving and those reasons may be based on their personal values, may be tax-driven, or a combination of both. As director of gift planning, I will be a resource for donors throughout the state to help them achieve their charitable gift plan in the most significant way possible. At the same time, I intend to reach out to professional advisors to discuss planned giving options available at MaineCF. If anyone has a question or would like to meet, please do not hesitate to reach me at (207) 412-0833 or jrichard@mainecf.org.

*Opposite: Jennifer Richard visits the farmers market in Monument Square, just steps away from the community foundation's new Portland office.
Photo Andrea Nemitz*

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A HIGHER QUALITY OF LIFE

The Maine Community Foundation's new strategic goals build on its core mission.



The mission of the Maine Community Foundation is to work with donors and other partners to *improve the quality of life for all Maine people*. The surest way to achieve a high quality of life is to live in *safe, open, and welcoming communities* that foster a sense of belonging and connectedness, of being valued, cared for, and protected. These kinds of communities *help build human capital*, that special stock of knowledge, skills, judgment, and creativity that enables people to be productive members of society.

Strong human capital, supported by welcoming communities, *will help the economy grow and thrive* and support a high quality of life for Mainers.

The Lofts at Saco Falls, constructed with support from a MaineCF impact investment to the Genesis Community Loan Fund, held its grand opening in September. The complex in downtown Biddeford features 80 new rental apartments in two renovated mill buildings constructed in 1842 and 1867.

Photo Thalassa Raasch

OUR FIVE STRATEGIC GOALS:

All Maine children receive a healthy start and arrive at kindergarten developmentally prepared to succeed in school and life.

All Maine people, including adult learners and other nontraditional students, are able to complete a degree or certificate program to maximize their potential.

All people of color in Maine have access to opportunities and life outcomes that are not limited in any way by race or ethnicity.

All older adults in Maine, especially those who are vulnerable, are valued and able to thrive and age in their communities with health, independence, and dignity.

Entrepreneurial innovation is broadly promoted and practiced in Maine, particularly in natural resource-based activities.