

WINTER / SPRING 2016

Maine *Ties*

NEWS FROM THE MAINE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



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COUNTY PHILANTHROPY—A CELEBRATION

“[Ed Kaelber’s and my] vision was to build a network of endowed funds in the rural counties of the state that would be advised by rural residents of those counties and available for local projects.”

—Marion Kane, oral history interview, 2004

This year, the Maine Community Foundation celebrates the 30th anniversary not only of its first three county funds—Aroostook, Piscataquis, and Washington—but the very idea of this special kind of community philanthropy in Maine. MaineCF’s first two presidents, Ed Kaelber and Marion Kane, who worked together over the first seven years of the foundation’s existence, had a vision to serve rural parts of Maine. “Because it’s such a big state,” Kane explained in a 2004 interview, “the only way you can do that is with local knowledge.”

The idea may not seem so visionary; after all, the community foundation field is largely place-based philanthropy that connects the passion of donors with specific needs in their communities. That concept has taken hold in Maine. Today, 14 of the state’s 16 counties have dedicated endowments, and the foundation’s County and Regional Program has become a national model for maximizing the impact of rural philanthropy.

In my first five months as president, I have had the honor of meeting a number of our county committee members. I have learned much from them about the opportunities and challenges facing their communities, what keeps them awake at night, and what allows them to sleep.

These county advisors, who serve as outreach ambassadors and grant reviewers, are hosting a series of Community Conversations across the state. At the first, held in Bangor, members of the Penobscot County Committee helped lead a lively discussion centered on quality-of-life challenges, from housing to public transportation to access to substance abuse treatment. The passion for their home county came through loud and clear.

That same passion also drives the donors we profile here: Connie Greaves Bates, Kathryn Olmstead, Cathy Sweetser, and Jock Moore. All four are dedicated to enhancing the well-being of people in their respective counties, and they all share a strong attachment to place – South Addison, Caribou, and Greenville.

Of course, the mission of the Maine Community Foundation is to improve the quality of life for *all* Maine people, whatever community or county they call home. As we move forward in our work, we will be calling on you to help us fulfill that ambitious goal.

Steve Rowe is president and CEO of the Maine Community Foundation. He will facilitate Community Conversations across Maine over the coming months. Visit www.mainecef.org for a schedule of upcoming gatherings.

A few of the participants in the Community Conversation at Husson University:

*Top: Steve Rowe, MaineCF President and CEO
Dr. Frank Bragg, Chair, MaineCF Penobscot County Committee
Rabbi Darah Lerner, Penobscot County Committee
Lenard Kaye, University of Maine Center on Aging
Mary Cathcart, Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center
Matt Polstein, MaineCF Board, New England Outdoor Center
All photos Kevin Benedict*

*On the cover: Carl Pratt, plant manager at Northern Girl in Van Buren, carries a box of carrots for processing. The Maine Community Foundation has supported this value-added food processing operation through an impact investing loan to the Fair Food Fund. “Feeding the County,” a video by Gabe Souza that highlights the impact of this investment, is available on YouTube.
Photo Gabe Souza*



AROOSTOOK COUNTY

Kathryn Olmstead names her passion(s).



Kathryn Olmstead’s list of things she appreciates about living in Aroostook County starts with the “warmth, authenticity, practicality, and generosity of the people, the beauty of the landscape, the starry dark night sky, and closeness to nature.” The Caribou resident is grateful for The County’s diverse cultures, Lebanese, Acadian, Micmac, Maliseet, Swedish, Scots, Irish, and other people who have taught her so much. And she respects the volunteer spirit, rural ethic of hard work, and the focus on natural conservation, “practiced before it was defined as a cause.”

Much of Olmstead’s passion for her home of more than 40 years lies in place, be it cross-country ski trails at the Nordic Heritage Ski Center or the “magical” spot on I-95 near Oakfield where, when driving south, Mount Katahdin appears “dead ahead, then gradually sinks out of sight.” Her love for The County is manifested through her columns for the *Bangor Daily News* and *Echoes* magazine, which she co-founded in 1988.

Olmstead has supported MaineCF’s work for many years. A member of the journalism faculty at the University of Maine for 25 years, she has shared her expertise as a longtime member of MaineCF’s Gannett Scholarship Fund committee.

In the 1990s Olmstead served on the Aroostook County Committee, an experience that provided an “inside-out look” at grantmaking, how applications are prepared and reviewed to ensure that the best projects receive the support they deserve. Her annual donation to the Aroostook County Fund allows her to support organizations and projects that benefit county residents. She admires the work of Catholic Charities, Aroostook Aspirations Initiative, and Ecumenical Food Bank, as well as the Take It Outside program of the Caribou Recreation and Wellness Center and Cary Medical Center’s Healthy You and Healthy Hearts programs.

*Kathryn Olmstead prepares to hit the cross-country ski trails at the Nordic Heritage Ski Center in Presque Isle.
Photo Paul Cyr*



*Dr. Jason Johnston, chair of the College of Arts and Sciences and associate professor of wildlife ecology at the University of Maine at Presque Isle, has a bird in hand as he demonstrates netting and banding during the Northern Maine Bird Festival at Aroostook National Wildlife Refuge.
Photo Bill Sheehan*

Recently, Olmstead came across an invitation in the MaineCF annual report: “Name your passion, create a fund.” She had just learned that major funding had ended for the Maine Winter Sports Center, which had revitalized skiing as a way of life in Aroostook County. She wondered whether she could create a fund to support organizations that promote healthy winter sports activities, which have inspired countless kids (one of whom became an Olympian) to get out on the trails.

Olmstead discussed the idea with a member of the MaineCF staff and “it was like lighting a fire.” The idea became “a small fund with great potential.” The Aroostook County Committee

will administer the fund—a sign of her trust in this team of local advisors to make grant decisions over time that fulfill her personal passion for winter sports.

Olmstead’s fondest hope? That her Aroostook Winter Sports Fund will help continue the work the Maine Winter Sports Center began: supporting public access to trails and facilities, such as those at the Nordic Heritage Ski Center in Presque Isle and the 10th Mountain Lodge in Fort Kent, the Four Seasons Trail Association in Madawaska, and the Aroostook National Wildlife Refuge in Limestone. Her philanthropy is focused on the future—and the great outdoors of Aroostook County.

Aroostook County Fund

Year founded: 1986

Total grants from county fund: \$690,197

Total organizations supported: 186

Advisors: 12

WASHINGTON COUNTY

Connie and Ed Greaves: An EdGE Legacy Grows



When Ed and Connie Greaves were living in Phippsburg, Maine, they had a sailboat, the *Caritas* (Latin for “charity”). “Ed had this dream of going to the ‘real’ Maine,” Connie recalls, “and he wanted a dock and mooring right out front.” On a sail down east, they spied a “for sale” sign on the shore in South Addison. They anchored, inquired, and purchased the property.

The couple built a house and fell in love with Washington County—a “life-changing” experience, Connie recalls. Not long after, the Maine Seacoast Mission in Bar Harbor asked Ed to join its board. Ed first encountered the Mission when he visited the *Sunbeam*, its service boat, while it was anchored in Boothbay. He developed a great fondness for this organization, which supports the needs of people in coastal and island communities.

In 2001 Ed Greaves learned he had cancer. His college roommate, and best man at his and Connie’s wedding, wanted to do something to honor his dear friend. Ed had a passion for the people of Washington County, specifically youngsters who struggled in school. With financial help from his best man, along with guidance from MaineCF’s second president Marion Kane; Maine Seacoast Mission Executive Director Gary DeLong; Warren Cook, a member of the Mission’s board; and Connie, the Ed Greaves Educational Program, or EdGE, was launched.

Connie remembers how important it was to assure local residents that the program was there “for the long haul.” The Ed Greaves Education Center, which opened in 2006 at Weald Bethel in Cherryfield, represents that long-term

*Charlie Harrington, EdGE director, and Connie Greaves Bates, at the opening of the Ed Greaves Education Center, June 15, 2006.
Photo courtesy Maine Seacoast Mission*



Kallie, Braylynn, Makayla, and Joshua, fourth-grade students from Jonesport Elementary School, participate in the 2016 EdGE Olympics.

Photo Kendra McCrate, courtesy Maine Seacoast Mission

commitment as does the remarkable leadership of Director Charlie Harrington and his wife, Wendy, director of service programs. EdGE began with after-school offerings in two schools and now is in nine schools, representing 20 communities with 750 students attending.

Connie, now Connie Greaves Bates, also appreciates the community foundation's help in her estate planning, starting with a charitable gift annuity she set up in 2001. Her estate plan includes a bequest to the foundation and annually she supports the Washington County Fund. She recognizes the important role the county fund's advisory committee plays in reviewing and recommending grants that will best benefit organizations across the county.

The EdGE program remains foremost in Connie's mind. She was excited when the Maine Seacoast Mission

launched the Marion Kane EdGE Leadership Program in 2013. Students in this program participate in activities that help them think critically about challenging topics, such as bullying, peer pressure, and substance abuse/addiction. They also learn leadership skills through team-building techniques. School principals support the program by allowing three consecutive days out of the academic year for class participation at the EdGE center in Cherryfield.

Connie feels that there is something "very moving" about being in Washington County—"the beauty of the landscape and spirit of the people." She looks forward to returning every year to that country of spruce, granite ledges, and islands, where her and Ed's legacy of education continues to grow.

Washington County Fund

Year founded: 1986

Total grants from county fund: \$1,089,501

Total organizations supported: 202

Advisors: 10

PISCATAQUIS COUNTY

The SweetMoore Scholarship: Another Way to Give Back



A love of woods, water, mountains, and history lured Cathy Sweetser and Jock Moore to Piscataquis County. For Jock, the connection goes back a couple of generations. His grandparents traveled to the region from Pennsylvania every summer. His parents bought a camp on Moosehead Lake in 1962. Sharing their love of the region, he moved to Greenville for good in 1971. He worked as a carpenter, plowed snow, made maple syrup—anything and everything to get by in this place he chose for his home.

Cathy, who grew up on an apple farm in Cumberland, Maine, met Jock in Greenville when she was 20. The area had all she was looking for: skiing, woods, the mountains and lake. Like her husband, she did what she had to to live in the area she came to love. She established a successful sewing business and taught skiing at Squaw Mountain,

where she helped run the Squaw Mountain Ski Education Foundation and later the Red Eagle Foundation, which strives to keep competitive skiing accessible to local youth.

“Greenville is a wonderful community,” Cathy notes, “neighbor helping neighbor, both young and old.” She and Jock felt welcomed and accepted. And over time they felt a growing desire to return the favor.

The couple has been active with a number of nonprofits. Jock has served on the board of the Moosehead Historical Society and Cathy on the board of the Red Eagle Foundation. They support the Moosehead Marine Museum, Natural Resources Education Center, and Appalachian Mountain Club. “We love the history and the outdoor recreation these and other organizations provide,” says Jock.

Cathy Sweetser and Jock Moore at the Blair Hill Inn in Greenville. This view of Moosehead Lake and Big Moose Mountain is one of their favorites. They drive over Blair Hill nearly every day and the prospect reminds them how lucky they are to live where they do.
Photo John Morrell



The steamboat Katahdin, owned by the Moosehead Marine Museum, embarked on its maiden voyage in 1914. In 1979 the Kate, which was built at the Bath Iron Works, was added to the National Register of Historic Places. Today, the 102-foot-long vessel carries passengers up and down the lake from June to October and is a major economic engine for the region.
Common-license photo by Flickr user todvz

Cathy also serves on the Piscataquis County Committee; she currently is chair. Working with this group of local leaders has opened her eyes to the many different organizations that are serving the needs of the people of Piscataquis.

Working with the Maine Community Foundation has provided Cathy and Jock the opportunity to establish a scholarship they have dreamed of for many years. The SweetMoore Scholarship Fund will be another way they give back to the community they love. “We want to help people of all ages to be able to expand their knowledge of the trades,” says Jock, “from auto mechanics to welding.”

Adds Cathy, “We have worked hard to learn new things and we want to help others get a jumpstart in their trade of choice with educated instructors.”

They both feel that keeping people interested in learning is important to any community. “We have a great school system and great nonprofits educating our youth,” says Cathy. The SweetMoore Scholarship will help expand access to education for students of all ages—and help fulfill the couple’s vision of a prosperous community, county, and world.

Piscataquis County Fund

Year founded: 1986

Total grants from county fund: \$625,220

Total organizations supported: 205

Advisors: 12

COACHING CLIENTS

Presque Isle estate planner Brian Hamel explains how connecting with people in his community, including a team of Special Olympians, inspires him and other donors to give back.

Mainecf: You're not originally from The County. How did you end up in Aroostook?

Brian Hamel: I've been in Maine since 1994. I came here specifically to redevelop the former Loring Air Force Base [in Limestone]. That's what brought me to Maine – the professional opportunity. I said no to the governor three times; to be honest, I couldn't see bringing my wife and three young daughters to what I thought was "the end of the earth." Those 11 years when I was president and CEO of the Loring Development Authority were some of the most rewarding times in my professional life.

What has kept me here are the people. And that's why I still call this home. The people of Aroostook County and the sense of community are what have kept us in northern Maine. I'm glad we made the decision to relocate to The County. It has been a gratifying 22 years in Maine.

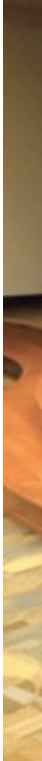
Mainecf: You're active in a lot of community activities. Can you tell us about that?

Hamel: My favorite thing to do in the world, other than being with my family, is spending time with my Special Olympians. I'm the volunteer head coach for the Aroostook County Snowdogs basketball team. We have 35 members on our team, ranging from 15 to 57 years old.

This is my fifth year as the head coach and it has been a life-altering experience. It is continually fulfilling to watch the respect the athletes have for themselves and for each other and the self-confidence they gain from playing on a basketball team. Coaching them has brought to life the importance of giving back to my community.

Mainecf: In your role as a professional advisor, what sort of conversations do you have with clients around charitable giving?

Hamel: I know how it has made my wife and I feel, giving back to our community, and so I always ask my clients about charitable giving. There's rarely a meeting with a client, when we're going over estate plans, that I don't ask, "What is your charitable intent during your lifetime or when you're gone?" I believe my contributions to the community have allowed me to probe a bit into what my clients' interests are, philanthropically.



Head coach Brian Hamel (left) with Team Maine at the Special Olympics USA Nationals held in Princeton, New Jersey, in June 2014. Team Maine won a bronze medal.



MaineCF: Do you have any stories related to the community foundation that you'd like to share?

Hamel: I have clients who have set up a donor-advised fund at the Maine Community Foundation. The fund is fairly substantial during their lifetime, and it will be far more when they're gone. They got excited about the foundation. The couple, who don't have children, wanted to give back to the community throughout their lives and beyond. To provide that kind of commitment when they weren't originally from here – that was a nice gesture.

My wife and I recently created a donor-advised fund of our own to support organizations that will benefit individuals with intellectual disabilities, which was a direct result of our involvement in Special Olympics. Those individuals who haven't had an opportunity in their lives to participate in activities or events – they all have a special place in my heart. They've taught me a lot of things.

MaineCF: Is there anything you'd like to share with other professional advisors?

Hamel: We owe it to the members of our individual communities to let them know what the Maine Community Foundation does on a day-to-day basis and where the money they manage goes: to nonprofits throughout Maine or to statewide initiatives. I recognize the role the foundation plays on a business level, but for me, personally, it is not about estate planning. It's about how MaineCF helps me and my clients figure out how we can support causes we care about a lot.

Brian Hamel is managing partner of Thompson-Hamel, LLC, in Presque Isle. A graduate of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Hamel has received several honors for his development and economic growth work as former president and CEO of the Loring Development Authority of Maine. He was named the State of Maine's Champion for Economic Growth by the Maine Development Foundation and Citizen of the Year by the Presque Isle Chamber of Commerce. Hamel has served on several boards, including the Maine Community Foundation, Northern Maine Community College Foundation, Maine Winter Sports Center, and Maine Community College System. He also served on MaineCF's Finance Committee. Hamel and his wife, Gail, have three daughters and five grandchildren.

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FREEDOM TO BE

The Equity Fund marks 20 years of support for social justice and LGBTQ communities.



A scene from Sanford Phippen's play Standing Just Outside the Door, a coming-out story of a Maine high school student in the 1960s, with David Sanderson as the teacher (left) and Tom Boss as the young man. A grant from the Equity Fund supported the play's production at The Grand Auditorium in Ellsworth.

Photo Chris Dougherty

Two decades ago a \$60,000 matching grant from the National Lesbian and Gay Community Funding Partnership planted the seed for MaineCF's Equity Fund, dedicated to social justice and support for all aspects of LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning) issues and community life.

As the fund grew, its grants diversified to reflect the changing landscape of LGBTQ issues – from early funding for AIDS services to growing support for transgender people in Maine.

Today it helps meet a range of needs for LGBTQ people of all ages. Funding has helped expand physical and virtual drop-in centers for older LGBTQ Mainers, while more programs empower teens to share their

stories, lead their peers, and advocate for schools safe from bullying and harassment.

The Equity Fund's impact is impressive, bolstered in 2007 by a \$750,000 grant from the River Rock Foundation. Since 1996, 144 grants totaling nearly \$600,000 have gone to 65 organizations in Maine.

MaineCF will mark the Equity Fund's milestone with free workshops, funded by a \$24,500 grant from an anonymous family foundation. The training series will bring together community leaders and help LGBTQ groups build even stronger networks and resilient organizations.

For more information about the Equity Fund, please contact Program Officer Laura Lee, llee@mainecf.org.