

MAINE TIES

NEWS FROM THE MAINE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

SPRING 2020



PROGRESS – AND CARE – FOR ALL

Dear Friends of MaineCF,

As we prepare to publish this newsletter, Mainers face daily challenges as they confront the COVID-19 pandemic. We have heard from many nonprofit organizations about their growing needs as demands for services increase and the full economic and social impacts of this crisis become clear.

MaineCF is encouraging donors to make general support grants to organizations they know and care about in their communities. We also created the COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund (COVID-19 Fund) to support community-based organizations working with the outbreak and its consequences. The fund, seeded with \$500,000 from an unrestricted MaineCF Fund, allows MaineCF to direct grants through regional nonprofit organizations. These grants will support efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19 on the front lines and serve the needs of those most affected by the virus.

My personal primary areas of interest in philanthropy are health and human services, so this crisis takes on special relevance. I'm grateful the foundation, with its mission to improve the quality of life for all Maine people, is in a position to help communities address the pandemic and increase the resilience of our broad nonprofit community.

I witnessed a nonprofit organization's determination to improve lives earlier this year when I visited the new Community Childhood Learning Place in my hometown of Castine. Its commitment to creating an environment where children can thrive impressed me. And it took a village: Castine residents remarkably transformed an 1895 water tank into the children's center with support from a MaineCF donor-advised grant.



We couldn't accomplish our work without the hundreds of volunteers who help us. Susan Hammond, director of Four Directions Development Corporation in Orono, does double duty as a member of MaineCF's board and chair of our Penobscot County Committee. She shares her story about efforts to improve the economic well-being of Maine's tribes and her thoughts on how the foundation's grantmaking helps meet the challenges of her home county.

And congratulations to the Waldo County Committee on its 30th anniversary. The story of one county fund grantee, the Waldo County Woodshed, is especially inspiring. We're thankful for the devoted corps of volunteers who bring heat to hundreds of homes each winter.

Investment advisor John Beliveau, profiled in this issue, is working with his family to address food insecurity in the Rumford area. In conjunction with the RSU 10 food program they purchased a delivery van for the district that distributes food to students in a part of Maine where many families have mobility issues and face food insecurity. The area school district has deployed even more vans to deliver bagged meals during the COVID-19 shutdown.

This year, our state's bicentennial, we're proud to recognize the economic and social progress in Maine since 1820 – and to be a sponsor of Maine Public's special series "This Is My Maine." At the same time, we know not everyone has benefited equitably in that progress. The state's 200th birthday provides an opportunity to honor all who live, or have lived, here – including Wabanaki people who have inhabited the land for more than 13,000 years. As we remember the past, let us commit to a future where all Maine people can live free from discrimination.

With 2019 in the books, the Maine Community Foundation can rightly tout an extraordinary year. Grants and scholarships totaled more than \$40 million and the number of individual funds at MaineCF topped 2,000. We thank all the individuals and organizations partnering with us to improve the quality of life for all Maine people. Now more than ever, it's all about community.

Karen Stanley is chair of the MaineCF Board of Directors. She lives in Castine.

Karen Stanley visits the new Community Childhood Learning Place in her hometown of Castine. Photo Ashley L. Conti

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On the cover / Learning how to play a violin, viola, or cello starts early for students in classes taught by musicians from the nonprofit Palaver Strings. **Story, page 12.**

The Maine Community Foundation works with donors and other partners to improve the quality of life for all Maine people. MaineCF is committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion, and ensuring Maine is a safe, welcoming, and accepting place for everyone. MaineCF's investment expertise supports our donors' effective and strategic giving. We offer a range of giving options tailored to fit each donor's financial means and charitable objectives. Our staff provides personalized service, community leadership, and a deep understanding of local issues. Learn more at mainecf.org.

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VOLUNTEER PROFILE

BUILDING COMMUNITY

*Susan Hammond, Penobscot County
Committee chair, MaineCF board member,
and an advocate for Maine's tribes*

Growing up in an Air Force family opened Susan Hammond's eyes to the world, from Washington, D.C., to Japan to Alaska. She remembers delivering newspapers in Anchorage at 5 a.m. when she was in middle school. "That's the kind of thing you did," she recalls, "even in the dead of winter."

Hammond's determination has shaped her life: Today she oversees a \$10-million nonprofit organization that has loaned more than \$12.5 million to Wabanaki communities, serves as a MaineCF board member, and leads the foundation's Penobscot County Committee.

After her father retired, Hammond's family returned to the Northeast and she spent a semester at the University of Maine. But she still had the urge to travel, so she joined the Air Force and saw more of the world before she came back to Orono and earned a BA in business administration.

Hammond, a tribal member, began economic development work for the Penobscot Nation in 1985 and helped launch a vocational education program. She started a family – "I got a little distracted," she says with a smile – but soon returned to the Penobscot Nation as finance manager for its health department.

Later, as director of the Tribal Housing Authority, Hammond set out to help tribal members renovate their homes and build new ones. She turned to the community development financial institution (CDFI) model that provides credit and financial services to underserved populations, and in 2001 co-founded Four Directions Development Corporation to help improve social and economic conditions of Maine's tribal people. In addition to its lending practices, she liked the CDFI developmental services component that provides financial education. At that time, fewer than 10 Native-governed CDFIs existed; today there are more than 70.

"It was a great model to use in Indian country," says Hammond. She credits MaineCF for its help establishing a cohort of Maine CDFIs that led to partnerships with Main Street Finance, Community Concepts, New Ventures Maine, CEI, Eastern Maine Development Corporation, and the Genesis Fund.

Headquartered in a business complex in Orono along with the UpStart Center for Entrepreneurship and several other organizations, Four Directions provides mortgage, home improvement, small business and community development loans, and often partners with lead lenders in the area, including Bangor Savings Bank. In addition to housing units, Four Directions helped with financing for a health wellness center in the Micmac community in Presque Isle. Most recently it worked with the Penobscot Nation to develop 24 housing units for tribal elders on Indian Island.

Hammond joined MaineCF's Penobscot County Committee at its founding in 2009 and now serves as its chair. She loves the county model "where people who know their counties come together to make grants, and support capacity-building in their communities." She praises the committee's grants for both their range – literacy, arts and culture, community centers – and their focus: significant support to address the opioid crisis through the Penobscot Valley Health Association component fund, which the committee oversees.

Penobscot County has one metropolitan area, Bangor, but is largely rural. That presents myriad challenges – from limited resources to out-migration and lack of health care facilities for older residents, says Hammond. She commends the collaborative spirit of county organizations to address those issues: "They work together and utilize the resources to make the biggest difference and positive change they can." A number of grant applications feature partnerships.

As a member of MaineCF's Board of Directors, Hammond is excited by continued work on the foundation's five strategic goals. "They are critical for the state of Maine," she says. At the same time, goal-related MaineCF summits bring awareness to challenges and opportunities, she says, and underscore the potential of collaboration.

Whether it's improving the lives of tribal members, addressing the opioid crisis, or moving Maine forward into the 21st century, Hammond believes those collaborative efforts are crucial. "We can't succeed alone," she says, with a gleam in her eye and determination in her voice.

*Susan Hammond in the community room at the new
housing facility for tribal elders on Indian Island.
Photo Ashley L. Conti*

A HOME-WARMING STORY

The Waldo County Woodshed brings neighbors together with a common goal



“Imagine a local food pantry or food bank. Replace the focus of food with firewood, and you have a center known as a wood bank.”

“How hard could that be?” wondered Belfast businessman Bob MacGregor when he read those words in a 2014 *Bangor Daily News* op-ed by researchers from the University of Maine School of Forest Resources.

Sabrina Vivian and Jessica Leahy had plotted 2010 census and other data points on a map of Maine, including where people burn wood and where it’s available. Two spots stood out, MacGregor recalls: Waldo and Piscataquis counties.

MacGregor was in Arizona at the time, but he soon recruited a committed group of volunteers who provided firewood to keep their neighbors warm. Today their Waldo County Woodshed has expanded to nine distribution spots that reduce time to pick up wood – eight in Waldo and one in Knox. Grants from MaineCF’s Waldo County Fund have helped the nonprofit organization purchase equipment and build a system to provide emergency supplemental firewood to households in need.

MacGregor came to the mission with solid wood credentials: a forestry degree from the University of Maine and 25 years of selling equipment to Maine sawmills. His co-founder, Dawn Caswell, also knew the wood world: she had worked at Robbins Lumber and currently manages Maine Grilling Woods in Waldo.

The Woodshed started at Caswell’s business, but moved to Searsport as the operation grew. Today its distribution sites are run by volunteers and range from transfer stations to Unity College’s McKay Farm in Thorndike. The Searsport shed is run by Bud Rivers, who also donates wood. “He oversaw the robotics team at Searsport High School, so he got those kids involved splitting wood,” says MacGregor. Most of the wood is processed by a local firewood producer, the rest by volunteers.

During winter 2018-2019, the Woodshed provided 170 cords of wood to 145 homes in 32 towns across four counties, totaling over \$46,000 in assistance. Wet forest conditions this year limited logging time, so the supply was more limited. This year it will be closer to 130 cords, although a few loads of ash helped extend the season. “We buy logs from loggers at whatever the going rate is,” MacGregor says, “and then we pay the guy to process the wood whatever it costs per cord.”

Waldo County Fund at 30

\$693,008

Total county fund grant dollars awarded

276

Total county fund grants awarded to 189 nonprofit organizations

\$40,492

County fund grants awarded in 2019

\$13,276

Donor-referred grants in 2019

\$429,214

Other MaineCF competitive grants and all scholarships to Waldo County in 2019

MacGregor and his team are always looking for new sources of support. “Fundraising is the biggest challenge,” he says. Last year, the sock company Bombas donated 1,200 pairs of socks that Woodshed volunteers offered with wood and distributed to area soup kitchens, food pantries, and the public nursing service.

“Honestly, you’d never know that some of these people have next to nothing,” says volunteer Sonja Twombly, who runs Lally Broch Farm with her husband Sean in Frankfort and coordinates wood pickups. She and MacGregor note how many clients pay it forward, arriving on a Saturday to help neighbors load their cars and refill the bins. “They don’t have money, so they come and put in sweat equity,” Twombly says. “Most of us want to do for ourselves.”

The firewood is distributed in quarter-cord allotments. Now in her second year as coordinator, Twombly says she didn’t realize until last fall how much she missed talking to people through her Woodshed work. Some weeks she speaks with as many as 80 families. “These are folks who are dealing with illnesses, or are between paychecks, or have a broken-down furnace,” she explains. Some of the cases are heartbreaking. “I love what I do,” Twombly says. “I also cry every single week.”

To learn more about the Waldo County Fund, please contact Leslie Goode, senior program officer, at lgoode@mainecf.org.

Left: Bob MacGregor works at the Waldo County Woodshed on equipment purchased with MaineCF funding. Inset photo: “We do some volunteer work around here,” says Ryan Mahonen as he and Paul Mahonen load wood for home. “We help out [the woodshed], and it helps us out also. It’s a good thing they do here.” Photos Ashley L. Conti



EYES ON THE FUTURE

Donors join Maine's efforts to reduce the impacts of climate change

Maine has more allies in the battle against climate change and the quest for carbon neutrality – and they're ready to help where tax dollars fall short or when institutions need resources.

They are philanthropists from foundations large and small, fundholders, and individual donors, all inspired to support the state's quest to reduce the impacts of climate change on residents, communities, industries, and ecosystems.

Alexander "Sandy" Buck, president of his family's Portland-based Horizon Foundation, worked with the Maine Community Foundation to establish the new Maine Climate Leadership Fund. The fund will enable donors to deploy dollars directly to the state's Maine Climate Council and also support pilot projects that demonstrate benefits of renewable energy, energy efficiency, and community resiliency.

mainecf.org

Buck serves as a philanthropic representative to the Maine Climate Council, which will prepare an action plan by

“We can't be incremental about this. The clock is running.”

- Sandy Buck, climate change funder

December 1, 2020, with ways to achieve a carbon neutral economy in the state by 2045. He's been a longtime champion for Maine's environment and was an early member of the Environmental Funders Network founded by Bo Norris, his co-leader of the Maine Climate Leadership Fund.

Buck is also a grandfather who knows the joys of growing up with woods and streams in a state that drew him here as a child, for college, and then back for good. He doesn't want his young grandchildren to someday ask him, "Why didn't you do anything?"

"I think that we all have a responsibility to do something," Buck says, "even if it's just basic conservation." More than 25 funders have embraced climate change efforts with Buck and committed time to learn where their dollars can be most effective, whether they are directed to rural towns for solar projects, resilience efforts to help communities prepare for climate-related challenges, or messaging support for the climate council's work.

"This is the time when philanthropic dollars can really make a difference; this public-private partnership can really happen," he says. "Why not seize that opportunity for the public? Foundations are looking for a way to have an impact – this is the perfect way to have an impact."

"Funders in Maine have proven to be very collaborative, particularly on environmental issues," adds Jennifer Southard, MaineCF vice president of

donor services and operations. "The Environmental Funders Network is one example of how a small group of people can make a difference over time. Collaborative leadership by people like Sandy Buck matters when you try to tackle such a large issue."

Private funding also has the potential to position Maine as a regional leader, which could attract additional support from large national foundations as it did two decades ago for conservation efforts.

"This will mark the beginning of change – a break from the past – where there's an aspirational future that was brought into shape by a public-private partnership," says Buck. "Let's look forward... There are ways to grow our economy and sustain our planet. It's not either/or. It's both."

Left: Sandy Buck, president of the Horizon Foundation, is joining forces with other funders to help further the state's climate change initiatives. Photo Yoon S. Byun

How You Can Help

The Legislature has appropriated \$250,000 per year through 2021 to support the Maine Climate Council. This funding is essential, but not sufficient to cover all of the council's needs. Maine foundations and individuals generously responded to the request for additional support with an in-kind contribution and \$450,000 for staff to support community resiliency, data analysis, and cost-benefit modeling. The Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future continues to raise funds for communications and early energy and resilience demonstration projects.

While the Maine Climate Council had planned public meetings to provide information and invite feedback prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, it now hopes to hire a communications firm to assist in development of presentations, webinars, a website, and social media to engage a broad range of state residents – including those without broadband service.

Learn more about climate change initiatives at mainecf.org

PROFESSIONAL ADVISOR



REMEMBERING HIS ROOTS

John Beliveau and his family take their philanthropy on the road to help alleviate food insecurity

MaineCF: John, I understand that you are actively involved in a community effort in rural Maine. Could you tell us about this?

John Beliveau: Yes, I am very excited about a project that my family has been working on in the Rumford area in conjunction with the RSU 10 food program. We recently purchased a food delivery van for the district that will be used as a mobile delivery unit to bring food to families and children who are

experiencing food insecurity. The Rumford and Mexico areas are pretty spread out, and a lot of these families have mobility issues. They may not have a car and there is very little public transportation in rural Maine. Being able to develop six or eight different sites around the community to deliver food allows this program to reach out to the community rather than having the community come to one centralized location at the school.

John Beliveau with RSU 10 nutrition director, Jeanne Lapointe, left, and Deb Alden, the superintendent of schools, and their food delivery van at Mountain Valley High School. Photo Russ Dillingham

At the start of the COVID-19 shutdown, RSU 10 began delivering even more bagged meals from its three production kitchens. Additional vans that usually transport students have joined the Nutrition Van outreach effort.

MaineCF: What is your connection to Rumford?

Beliveau: Our family has four generations going back to Rumford. We have provided some additional funding along with others with ties to the Rumford area, including the Jean and Shelton Noyes Fund. The plan is to be able to deliver up to possibly 2,000 meals a week to families and their children. The community seems to be very interested in it, and as other organizations such as Full Plates Full Potential and MaineCF learn about the issue, it's bringing awareness to the difficulties of dealing with hunger issues in rural Maine.

MaineCF: You mentioned that this is one way you are involved in the community. What other types of activities are you involved in?

Beliveau: I am also actively involved in board activities with Portland Community Squash, Maine Huts & Trails, and the Maine Public Employees Retirement System. I have really focused on helping children and protecting the environment and outdoors. For example, Portland Community Squash uses squash along with a mentorship program and academic tutoring program to encourage underserved youth to have the aspirations to continue their education beyond high school.

MaineCF: On the professional side of what you do, what sort of conversations do you have with your clients about philanthropy?

Beliveau: At H.M. Payson we have a comprehensive financial planning group and how philanthropy fits into a client's financial plan is very important. The conversations start with gaining an understanding of the rank order of the client's financial priorities. Most often, as you would expect, financial security for themselves and their families comes first. However, increasingly with a lot of clients, charitable giving is becoming a higher and higher priority both during their lifetime and through their estate. Once we know they have an interest in giving, we start looking at the most efficient means for making those charitable gifts.

MaineCF: When you say the most efficient means, are you talking about looking at the different types of assets they can give?

Beliveau: Both the different types of assets they own and their specific circumstances. For lifetime gifts, we need to know whether they claim the standard deduction or if they itemize their deductions. If they do not have enough deductions to itemize, we may discuss bunching their charitable donation in one year into a donor-advised fund. If they are over age 70½ and have IRA assets, we may discuss making a qualified charitable distribution. Both of these strategies are very tax efficient. If giving through their estate, we increasingly recommend that clients use their beneficiary designation on a part or all of their IRA as the most tax-efficient way to give to charity and leave a legacy.

MaineCF: Is there anything you'd like to share with other professional advisors about how MaineCF can be a resource for them?

Beliveau: Because MaineCF is so tied to the entire state, it can be a tremendous resource and information source for people who really want to have their philanthropy dedicated to entities throughout the state. I just started my donor-advised fund at the Maine Community Foundation after talking to your staff about what resources MaineCF offers for someone like me who is trying to help less fortunate people in rural Maine. In fact, we recently had a client who had a similar interest and wanted to increase their philanthropy in a strategic way. In conversations with the foundation my client and I were able to have a really great dialogue about what's the most tax-efficient way to fund it and, once the donor-advised fund gets funded, how they can use MaineCF resources to make their philanthropy targeted to their focus on Western Maine and some central Maine counties as well.

I would certainly encourage other advisors to work with MaineCF to go down that same path because sometimes what you don't know is really important and MaineCF can help fill those gaps.

John Beliveau is a managing director and portfolio manager at H.M. Payson in Portland, where he has worked since 1999. He earned his BA from Saint Anselm College and his MBA from the University of Oregon.



MUSICAL MAGIC

It's a big day at Palaver Music Center's small office above Portland's Exchange Street, where several neatly arranged little black cases vie for space on the couch. Inside are tiny violins and violas – the smallest just 16 inches long – that preschool musicians will soon hold for the first time.

Students in the nonprofit's Introduction to Strings have prepared well for this special class and their new instruments, which also include child-size cellos. They've toted paper violins – personalized with their own stickers and paint – to home and back for five weeks. Most importantly, they've learned how to care for their real instruments as gently as they'd treat a baby – habits that will last a lifetime, says violist and teacher Elizabeth Moore. A grant from MaineCF's Rines Thompson Fund provided funds for 17 instruments.

Palaver Strings, a 13-member ensemble that performs across Maine and elsewhere, relocated last year from Boston to Portland. Drawn by the city's diverse population and need

for more music education, it forged partnerships with other organizations to build community across socio-economic and racial backgrounds.

Children who meet for classes at the Immigrant Welcome Center aren't newcomers, thanks to Palaver's music education that began at five Portland childcare centers. Starting with the youngest, Matthew Smith, a Palaver Strings cellist, uses singing and dancing to engage infants with techniques similar to teaching a language. Palaver aims to add one class each year up to 12th grade.

"It was clear from very early on that we were all interested in education and how important it is to reach people where they are, where they're comfortable, and reach young people," says Moore. "Whether they become musicians themselves or become audience members, it's vital to music to engage with this generation."

Photo Yoon S. Byun