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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Community Foundation Awards \$100,000 from Polaroid Fund

Grantees will Focus on Workforce Development

The Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts (CFSEMA) has awarded \$100,000 in grants from the Polaroid Fund for New Bedford area programs that focus on workforce development, with an emphasis on English literacy and adult education.

Six organizations or collaboratives will receive grants in the 2007 funding cycle of the Polaroid Fund's New Bedford area grants program, managed by the Community Foundation for the first time this year under a contract with the Boston Foundation.

"Greater New Bedford faces many challenges to developing a ready workforce, from the decline in manufacturing jobs to the higher-than-average high school dropout rate," said CFSEMA President Craig J. Dutra. "With these grants, CFSEMA and the Boston Foundation hope to mitigate barriers to learning and job readiness such as cultural differences, transportation and child care issues, and fragmentation of available services."

The grants recipients are:

- **New Bedford Coalition for Lifelong Learning**, (Bristol Community College with New Bedford Public Schools Division of Adult Education, the Greater New Bedford Workforce Investment Board, Greater New Bedford Career Center, UMass Dartmouth Worker's Ed. Program): \$26,104 for "ESOL Pathways and College Careers." The collaborative hopes to increase the skills of GED and Adult Program graduates to ensure success in post-secondary education, and to overcome fragmentation by creating a program with coalition partners.
- **Catholic Social Services**, \$20,000 for "Future Education and Adult Literacy." This program will include instruction in literacy, English and intensive GED training for native Spanish and Portuguese speakers; address the needs of older students in the North and South Ends of New Bedford; and offer advocacy and training for citizenship.

- **Organization Maya K'iche'**, \$17,896 for the “Mayan Read-to-Work Literacy Initiative.” This grant will provide an outreach worker for the Mayan Community to target Mayan-speakers eager to overcome language barriers at work, and to coordinate a staff of ESOL tutors with potential and current students.
- **PACE**, \$15,000 for the “PACE Family Center.” This grant will fund a transition specialist to work with current PACE English as a Second Language (ESOL) students to prepare plans for continuing education or a job search, to identify resources in the community, and to overcome access barriers by providing childcare and transportation.
- **Steppingstone**, \$11,000 for the “New Bedford Women’s Program, Project Ed.” This will fund the expansion of adult education, formal job training, and post-secondary education opportunities; overcome access barriers by providing childcare and transportation; and provide scholarships for post-secondary education, training and testing.
- **United Interfaith Action**, \$10,000 for Operating Support to advocate on a local and state level to redress provider shortages, and to increase opportunities for ESOL and adult basic education.

The Polaroid Fund seeks to help children and adults become more independent and realize their full potential as successful members of society. Toward this end, it supports activities that help the most vulnerable people in the community build the skills and literacy that will help them attain their educational and employment goals.

About the Community Foundation

Since 1995, area residents have been turning to the Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts to make their philanthropic giving as effective as possible. CFSEMA is a public charity serving thousands of people who share a common concern – improving the quality of life in Southeastern Massachusetts.

To date, the Community Foundation has assets of more than \$16 million and has distributed over \$4.8 million from 84 funds to humanitarian, educational and cultural organizations in the region. More information about the Foundation can be found at www.cfsema.org.

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