

February 6, 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Community Foundation Raises Nearly \$4 Million in 2007; Gives Over \$1.5 Million in Grants Back to Community

New Scholarships and Grants distributed to the Fall River Area

2007 was a banner year for the Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts (CFSEMA), which raised nearly \$4 million and more than doubled the amount of revenues brought in the previous year. This brings the Foundation's endowment to more than \$18.5 million.

This past year the non-profit Foundation returned more than \$1.5 million to Southeastern Massachusetts through grants to arts and cultural institutions, environmental and educational programs and for scholarships in the 41 cities and towns served by the organization. Last year, CFSEMA also added 15 new funds to its roster, bringing the total to 110.

Among the new funds are two scholarships that were transferred to CFSEMA last year, which are intended for Fall River area students: The **Luther B. Bowman Scholarships** are \$500 awards to Westport High School graduating seniors for business, trade, secretarial or technical schools; eight \$500 scholarships were awarded in 2007. A second, the **Frank D. Sylvia Trust Scholarship**, is a \$9,000 annual award for a Dighton or Somerset High School student. One \$9,000 scholarship was awarded in 2007.

Also, more than \$138,000 was received through grants for the **Durfee High School Education Enrichment Fund**, established to support programs such as the Resiliency Preparatory School. According to Principal Omari Walker, the funds have benefited over 200 students in both the Resiliency Preparatory School, an independent alternative high school in Fall River, and the Resiliency for Life program.

"In September, we took our students to Caratunk, Maine, on a whitewater rafting and camping expedition, which allowed staff and students to bond together, and which set the tone for the current school year," Mr. Walker said. "We have utilized a portion of these funds to establish a technology computer lab here at RPS, which has greatly benefited our students in a variety of ways. This lab was sorely needed at RPS, and would not have been possible without this funding."

“Our substantial growth from a fledgling organization launched 12 years ago has allowed us to move forward with our mission of improving the quality of life in Southeastern Massachusetts,” said CFSEMA Board Chair and BankFive CEO Thomas F. Lyons. Mr. Lyons noted that the total amount of gifts to the Community Foundation in 2007 was the second largest received in the Foundation’s history, exceeded only in 2005 when the Acushnet Foundation trustees donated \$8 million in assets – believed to be the largest single gift to a public charity in Greater New Bedford – to establish a committee-advised fund.

The \$1.5 million awarded represents about 150 grants and 50 scholarships. These grants also included:

- Grants from several funds to Fall River-based organizations, including awards from Donor Advised Funds to **Bristol Elder Services; Bristol Community College; Catholic Memorial Home; Citizens for Citizens; Healthy City Fall River; Our Sister’s Place; St. Anne’s Hospital; Thomas Chew Memorial Boys & Girls Club; Stanley Street Treatment and Resources and the Veterans Association of Bristol County.** A total of more than \$355,000 in grants was made from nine **Donor Advised Funds.**
- Over \$200,000 awarded to families impacted by the immigration raid on the Michael Bianco factory in New Bedford’s South End and to the agencies that have assisted them through the **New Bedford Immigrant Families/Niños Fund and the New Bedford Humanitarian Relief Fund...**
- 33 grants totaling \$357,000 from the **Acushnet Foundation Fund.** The fund also established a \$100,000 **Early Literacy Initiative, which will support programs serving families with young children ages 0-3 years old.**
- Nearly **\$116,000 in scholarships** from 20 funds to 50 graduating high school seniors from various Southeastern Massachusetts schools. Besides the Bowman and Sylvia scholarships described above, a **\$1,600 Charles J. Lewin Interfaith Scholarship was awarded to a Durfee High School** graduating senior last year.

About the Community Foundation

Since 1995, area residents have been turning to the Community Foundation 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.

While the Foundation’s primary grantmaking focus is on the SouthCoast communities of Greater New Bedford, Greater Fall River, and Southern Plymouth County, CFSEMA is a regional foundation serving 41 cities and towns. To date, the Community Foundation has assets of more than \$18.5 million and has distributed nearly \$6 million from 108 funds to humanitarian, educational and cultural organizations in the region. To learn more about the Foundation, visit www.cfsema.org.