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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Community Foundation Funds Award \$125,000 in Workforce Development and Family Literacy Grants

The Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts recently awarded \$125,000 in workforce development and early literacy grants through a joint effort of the Polaroid and Acushnet Foundation Funds.

“These grants are part of our ongoing strategy to fund programs that are working to increase the region’s historically low levels of educational attainment,” said CFSEMA President Craig J. Dutra.

Seven local organizations received a total of \$75,000 in grants from the Polaroid Fund for workforce development programs, with an emphasis on advocacy to increase state and local resources, as well as English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), Adult Basic Education (ABE), and General Education Development (GED) classes. They are:

- **Bristol Community College**, \$12,000 for "ESOL Pathways and College Careers," a transition program targeting underemployed New Bedford GED/Adult Diploma ESOL graduates for successful enrollment in post-secondary education.
- **Catholic Social Services**, \$12,000 for "Future Education and Adult Learning" to provide ESOL classes for Portuguese and Spanish-speaking adults.
- **Immigrants Assistance Center**, \$12,000 for ESOL classes with citizenship preparation.
- **Greater New Bedford Workforce Investment Board**, \$10,000 for "*LiteracyWorks*," a third-year program addressing local workforce development and low educational attainment challenges through advocacy and capacity building.
- **Mass. Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA)**, \$10,000 for the "English Works" campaign to provide advocacy for immigrant workers, workplace literacy programs and business investment in ESOL programs.
- **Steppingstone**, \$8,000 for Project EdNA. a workforce development initiative that provides services to two New Bedford Women's Programs.
- **United Interfaith Action**, \$10,000 to advocate and provide capacity building for at-risk adults with low-paying jobs.

MORE

An additional \$50,000 was awarded in a joint effort of the Polaroid and Acushnet Foundation funds to two family literacy programs that integrate early literacy programming for children birth to three years old with ESOL and parenting courses.

- **Catholic Social Services**, \$8,000 to continue and expand its Early Literacy Program for the homeless at-risk residents of Donovan House and other families served by CSS.
- **PACE Family Center**, \$42,000 for a New Bedford Family Literacy Project within the Family Literacy Center located in the Hayden McFadden Elementary School.

In 2006, the Community Foundation began managing the New Bedford Area grant program of the Polaroid Fund, a discretionary fund of the Boston Foundation. The Polaroid Fund distributes up to \$100,000 each year to support organizations or collaboratives that focus on workforce development, with an emphasis on English literacy (ESOL) and adult education (ABE and GED) courses

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.

While the Foundation's primary grantmaking focus is on the SouthCoast communities of Greater New Bedford, Greater Fall River, and Greater Plymouth County, CFSEMA is a regional foundation serving 41 cities and towns. To date, the Community Foundation has distributed over \$7 million from 114 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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