

November 12, 2009

## **CELEBRATE CHARITABLE GIVING DURING COMMUNITY FOUNDATION WEEK NOVEMBER 12–18**

*Community Foundation of Southeastern Mass. is helping our community*

The Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts (CFSEMA) will join more than 700 community foundations across the United States in celebrating charitable giving during ***Community Foundation Week***, November 12–18, 2009. In 2007, community foundations gave an estimated \$4.1 billion to a variety of nonprofit activities in fields that included the arts, education, environment, disaster relief, and health and human services.

Locally, CFSEMA has received contributions of more than \$20 million since 2005, and has distributed nearly \$7 million in grants and scholarships from 127 funds since then. These grants have been used to support youth programs, expand economic opportunities, increase educational attainment, promote sustainability, invest in the creative economy and, through the Women's Fund, improve the economic status of women and girls.

“Community foundations are at the heart of our cities and towns,” said CFSEMA President Craig J. Dutra. “We know the places of need in our area, and we can direct resources to solve those problems. Despite the economic downturn that has impacted all of us, CFSEMA continues to find ways to expand economic opportunities and improve the quality of life in Southeastern Massachusetts.”

Other recent CFSEMA efforts include the local launch of the statewide *English Works* Campaign, an effort to make English classes more available to immigrants in the workplace. This campaign is aligned with CFSEMA's efforts to increase the region's low educational attainment, and the New Bedford *English Works* Fund has been established to help finance the effort. A similar effort is planned for 2010 in Greater Fall River. CFSEMA also continued to expand its role in Greater Fall River, awarding Fall River Mini-Grants to nine organizations and establishing new funds that will be active in supporting programs across the region.

Community foundations are one of the fastest-growing forms of philanthropy in the United States, with total assets of more than \$50 billion. Every state in the U.S. is home to at least one community foundation. Although community foundations make up only 1 percent of all U.S. grantmaking foundations, they account for more than 9 percent of all foundation giving. While the community and clients each foundation serves vary greatly, every community foundation shares in the commitment of improving the lives of others.

“Community foundations are catalysts for positive change within both urban and rural areas,” said Steve Gunderson, president and CEO of the Council on Foundations. “Donors of all income levels and from all geographic regions are finding community foundations to be an ideal way for them to easily give back to their community in a meaningful way.”

***Community Foundation Week*** began in 1989 with a proclamation from former president George H.W. Bush and a congressional briefing about community foundation activities. The observance has made donors seeking to maximize their philanthropic dollars aware of community foundations' charitable activities and services.

### ***About the Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts***

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 distributed over \$8 million from 127 funds to humanitarian, educational and cultural organizations in the region. For more information about the Foundation, call (508) 996-8253 or visit [www.cfsema.org](http://www.cfsema.org).

