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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Community Foundation Funds Award \$100,500 in Workforce Development and Early Literacy Grants

The Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts (CFSEMA) recently awarded \$100,500 in workforce development and early literacy grants with funding from the Polaroid and Acushnet Foundation Funds.

This is the Community Foundation's 6th year of managing the New Bedford Area grants program of the Polaroid Fund under contract with the Boston Foundation. The Polaroid Fund distributes up to \$100,000 each year to support organizations or collaboratives that focus on workforce development and early literacy. CFSEMA's Acushnet Foundation Fund also provides up to \$12,500 for early literacy programming.

"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.

Nine local organizations received a total of \$73,500 in grants from the Polaroid Fund for workforce development programs, with an emphasis on advocacy and capacity building, 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**, \$15,000 for *Education in Employment Project*, whose goal is to design and implement an employer-driven program for education.
- **Catholic Social Services**, \$7,000 for *Future Education and Adult Learning*, a program that will provide ESOL, GED and citizenship classes for Spanish and Portuguese speakers.
- **Community Economic Development Corp.**, \$12,000 for a pilot project to recruit and train ESOL tutors titled the *ESOL Capacity Building and Advocacy Project*.
- **Commonwealth Workforce Coalition**, \$10,000 for professional development and training for workers from Greater New Bedford organizations that provide ABE, ESOL, and literacy programs.
- **City of New Bedford Community Literacy Project**, \$1,500 to provide transportation and child care services for the *Shining Lights/ESOL: Community Literacy Project*, as well as off-site education programs at sites such as the public library and City Hall.
- **Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School/Adult ESOL Program**, \$5,000 to provide ESOL services to non-English speaking parents of GNB Voc-Tech students.

- **Immigrants Assistance Center**, \$10,000 for the *ESOL Capacity Building and Advocacy Project*, which will offer ESOL classes with citizenship preparation.
- **Mass. Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition**, \$8,000 for the *English Works/New Bedford Campaign*, to provide leverage for the recently funded AmeriCorps New Americans Integration Program to build a volunteer brigade, compile data, and sustain advocacy.
- **PAACA**, \$5,000 for *INSIGHT Youth Services*, an effort to increase the educational attainment of out-of-school youth with no high school diploma.

An additional \$27,000 was awarded by the Acushnet Foundation and Polaroid Funds to four Early Literacy Programs:

- **ArtWorks!**, \$7,500 for *Learning Studio*, an interactive arts experience.
- **Catholic Social Services**, \$5,000 for the *Early Literacy Program* to offer ESOL, ABE and parenting classes at the Donovan House family shelter.
- **New Bedford Public Schools-Pregnant and Parenting Teens**, \$7,500 for *Emerging Readers*, which will offer early and family literacy services to teen parents and their children.
- **PACE Family Center**, \$7,000, which will enable the *Family Center Literacy Program* to provide ESOL and family literacy services for 10-15 families at Dottin Place and Satellite Village.

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. Over the past seven years, the Community Foundation has distributed more than \$10 million in grants and program support from 156 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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