



COMMUNITY FOUNDATION of Southeastern Massachusetts

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Polaroid, Acushnet Foundation, Funds Support Our Newest Americans

The Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts (CFSEMA) recently awarded \$100,000 in workforce development and early literacy grants with funding from the Polaroid Fund and the Acushnet Foundation Early Literacy Consortium.

This is the Community Foundation's 10th year of managing the New Bedford Area grants program of the Polaroid Fund under contract with the Boston Foundation. The Polaroid Fund has distributed up to \$100,000 each year to support organizations or collaboratives that focus on workforce development and early literacy.

“New Bedford has a proud history of welcoming and helping immigrants,” said Community Foundation President John Vasconcellos. “By partnering with Polaroid and The Boston Foundation, the Community Foundation is extremely proud of being able to provide grants that will help our newest fellow Americans along the path of becoming educated and contributing members of our community.”

Seven local organizations received a total of \$76,000 in grants from the Polaroid Fund to support 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:

- **Community Economic Development Center**, \$12,000 in renewed funding for the *ESOL/Immigrant Support Network*, a neighborhood based ESOL program and workforce development services and support for a pilot program to reach out to newly arrived immigrant youth via afterschool academic support through arts-based curriculum.
- **Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School/Adult ESOL Program**, \$6,000 in renewed support for an Adult ESL program, which helps the parents of GNB Voc-Tech students whose first language is not English in learning English so they may become more involved and engaged in their child's education, in the school, and in the community.
- **Holy Union Sisters / Sister Barbara Walsh**, \$15,000 in renewed support for **Open ESOL**, which provides educational services to non-English speaking immigrants, particularly single parents. The program offers interactive computer learning activities, as well as workbook and conversational experiences - all designed to enhance the learning of English grammar, vocabulary and speaking skills.

- **Immigrants Assistance Center**, \$15,000 in renewed support for ESOL classes with civics and citizenship preparation.
- **Junior Achievement of New Bedford, \$5,500 for Investing in the Future at the Gomes School**, the expansion of a JA program for grades K-5 at the Gomes Elementary school, reaching 23 classes (600+ students) and providing grade-appropriate curriculum focusing on personal economics, the importance of education, the contributions of productive citizens and families to community, and skills to make smart academic and economic choices in the future.
- **United Interfaith Action**, \$7,500 in renewed support for Building Opportunity for Good Paying Jobs, which works to increase good job opportunities for those marginalized from the labor market in New Bedford.
- **Women's Fund of Southeastern Mass., \$15,000 in renewed funding for the LifeWork Project**, which is in the fourth year of a 5-year program. LifeWork is a collaborative, evidence-based program to enhance the career opportunities and fiscal management skills of economically challenged women in GNB.

A total of \$24,000 in additional support from the Acushnet Foundation's Early Literacy Consortium and from Polaroid is supporting family literacy programs that integrate early literacy programming for children from birth to three years old with ABE/ESOL and parenting courses:

- **City of New Bedford Dept. of Community Services**, \$7,000 in renewed funding for *Shining Lights/ESOL: Civic Literacy/ESOL Project* to expand family literacy nights, which were piloted last year, from twice per month to once per week. The program aims to support students' involvement in their children's linguistic development. Funding will offset increased expenses related to transportation, healthy snacks, chapter books, and literacy workbooks for children
- **New Bedford Art Museum/ArtWorks!**, \$10,000 in renewed funding to continue and expand *Learning Studio: Early Literacy through the Arts*, an interactive arts experience which provides ABE/ESOL parents and caregivers experiences that engage parents in their children's learning and foster literacy..
- **PEOPLE, Inc., \$7,000 for SMILES** to expand the after-school mentoring program at Parker Elementary to include an afterschool pilot serving 10 at-risk students and their families. Students' parents will be offered ESL classes while students meet with their mentors.

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 distributed over \$25 million from 250 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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