

Stamford nonprofits receive \$80,000 from First County Bank Foundation

First County Bank Foundation recently gave \$80,000 in grants to eight nonprofit organizations in Stamford. These organizations are in the process of deploying the funds to help their members and the community.

“It has been a very busy summer for the foundation,” said First County Bank Foundation Vice President Katherine Harris. “Although for recipients of these grants, it has been even busier as they help individuals, families and children cope with living arrangements, mental health issues and educational and social support programs.

“On behalf of the First County Bank Foundation, I want to personally thank these organizations and their employees for their dedication to the people of lower Fairfield County,” said Harris. “It’s not easy and many of us take for granted that others in the community volunteer their time to help others. All of us at First County Bank continue to donate our time and money to improving the lives of others.”

Established in 2001 in honor of the bank’s 150th anniversary, the First County Bank Foundation was created to distribute funds annually to nonprofit organizations that support community and economic development for children and families. As a mutual bank with no shareholders, First County Bank considers contributions made by the foundation a means of paying dividends back to the local communities it serves. Through 2009, the foundation has been able to award 343 grants totaling \$3.5 million to various community organizations.

To be eligible, organizations must have nonprofit tax exempt status under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code; be located in Stamford, Darien, Greenwich, New Canaan, Norwalk or Westport; have community support; address community needs; have measurable outcomes; and demonstrate fiscal and administrative responsibility. Special consideration is given to those agencies or programs benefiting low to moderate income populations.

Although the deadline for applying for First County Bank Foundation grants has passed, a new short-form application, available April 1 until the end of the year, can be downloaded at http://www.firstcounty.com/Foundation_Application_r3.pdf. Short-form applications are defined as grants of \$2,500 or less for applicants who fit the regular grant criteria, and \$1,000 or less for applicants that do not fit regular grant criteria.

The following Stamford-based organizations recently received grants from First County Bank Foundation:

Organization/ Grant Amount/ Cause

Childcare Learning Centers

\$20,000

CLC enriches the community as the leader in early childhood development by providing comprehensive, high-quality early childhood education and care programs for all families.

CTE Inc.

\$15,000

CTE is the federal and state designated Community Action Agency for the Stamford, Greenwich and Darien communities. CTE's mission is to counter the basic causes of poverty in the greater Stamford area. CTE has provided diverse services and advocacy to reduce the physical, economic and psychological barriers to self-sufficiency for low-income individuals, families and communities, giving them the ability to rise out of poverty. First County Bank Foundation grant will be used for the after school academy program.

Domus

\$10,000

Domus helps children and their families experience academic and life success through educational, residential and community programs. Domus helps children meet their full potential by building loving, trusting relationships in structured, respectful environments. This grant benefits the Domus Lion's Den After School Program.

Shelter for the Homeless

\$10,000

Shelter for the Homeless is a safe and caring environment that serves lower Fairfield County by providing temporary housing to homeless men; striving to obtain permanent supportive housing and services for men and women tailored to meet their relevant needs; and empowering people to help themselves achieve their greatest level of self-sufficiency. Grant money will be used to purchase new lockers.

Yerwood Center Inc.

\$10,000

The Yerwood Center is focused on providing youth and Stamford's diverse community with educational and personal development opportunities that will empower them to reach their full potential and contribute to society. Its vision is to be the premier youth center in which every young person, whatever their background is valued and challenged to become the best they can be. Foundation money will be used for the Extended Day and Out of School programs.

ARI of Connecticut Inc.

\$5,000

Foundation money will be used toward ARI's Supported Living Services, designed for those individuals who are generally able to live independently, but require some assistance in order to do so. Many individuals living in group homes or with families develop the skills to be able to live on their own, and often those who develop such skills desire to live in their own apartment or house.

Ferguson Library

\$5,000

The Ferguson Library, Stamford's public library, provides free and equal access to print, audiovisual and evolving electronic resources, and supports childhood education and lifelong learning through reading and other forms of communication by addressing the informational, educational, cultural and literacy needs of the Stamford community. This grant will fund Helping Hand, computer support for Stamford youth at the library.

Laurel House Inc.

\$5,000

Laurel House is a self-help organization, jointly operated by men and women with mental illness, and a caring professional staff. The program is based on the "clubhouse model," pioneered by Fountain House in New York City, and has operated in the Stamford area since 1984. This grant will provide funding for building renovations and improved access for members with physical disabilities.

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