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Cyclists riding in the "Tour de Lyme", which helps to raise money for Lyme Land Conservation Trust.
Photo credit: Joe Standart.

What's your passion?

Like many people, John Pritchard is passionate about the environment.

John spent 43 years as a corporate litigator in New York City, but bought a home in Lyme in 1970 with his wife Lee to escape the hustle and bustle of the city, and to enjoy the outdoor activities and beauty that Eastern Connecticut offers to its residents.

"I fully retired to Lyme five years ago and realized that I wanted to work to make a difference on environmental issues," says John, who now serves as president of the Lyme Land Conservation Trust (LLCT), which focuses on helping to conserve Lyme's natural, scenic and historic land and water resources. To advance the work, the Trust relies on volunteers and gifts from

generous donors. He says, "We have been able to do a lot of great work to acquire and conserve land, address clean water issues and offer fun, engaging educational opportunities, but thinking about the long-term sustainability of the work is critical." John and Lee turned to the Community Foundation to set up two funds that will ensure that LLCT and other organizations will receive their financial support now and forever. The "now" is accomplished through an endowed donor advised fund through which John and Lee will recommend grants to environmentally-focused nonprofits.

"A donor advised fund is like having your own private family foundation without all of the red tape," says John. "Donor advisors get to focus on the important and rewarding aspect of philanthropy, which is making a difference through investing in your passions."

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From
Maryam Elahi
President & CEO



Welcoming 2019 with a renewed purpose

As the New Year unfurls, we are reflecting on our 2018 achievements and focusing on initiatives we have in store for 2019.

Last year the Community Foundation celebrated its 35th anniversary of serving our communities of Eastern Connecticut. In this milestone anniversary year, we achieved an unprecedented grantmaking level of over \$6.7 million, including our inaugural grants from the Mary Janvrin and Natalie Janvrin Wiggins Fund for Birds, Other Animals and Nature. This is the Community Foundation's first animal welfare and environmental fund that benefits our entire 42-town region. Let's hope it's the first of many!

Looking ahead, we are partnering with libraries in our region to co-host the 2019 LeadingTOGETHER Thriving Community Conversations series. Thank you to our friends at Groton Public Library for kicking off the series with us last October!

We will also be advancing the work of our Women & Girls Task Force on Public Policy

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to promote women's rights; continuing to expand the scope of our Nonprofit Capacity Building Collaborative; and furthering the work of the Connecticut Funders Collaborative to Promote Civic Engagement.

With the new year comes new possibilities, and we at the Community Foundation are committed to bringing about positive change and opportunity to our communities. We can't do it without your support and guidance, so I ask that you continue to join us in **Leading Together** for the good of *all* in Eastern Connecticut.

Warm regards,



Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut Board of Trustees

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OUR VISION FOR OUR REGION

A healthy, thriving, sustainable Eastern Connecticut

OUR MISSION

To put philanthropy into action to address the needs, rights and interests of our community in Eastern Connecticut while fulfilling the passions of our donors

OUR VALUES

- Integrity
- Inclusivity
- Respect
- Courage
- Collaboration
- Transparency
- Accountability
- Kindness
- Empathy

OUR WORK

- Convene and serve as a thought partner with like-minded donors, nonprofits and other leaders to ensure collective impact, especially around four priority focus areas:
 - **Empower youth**
 - **Promote basic needs and rights**
 - **Preserve the environment**
 - **Advance animal welfare**
- Bring resources and knowledge to nonprofit organizations in Eastern Connecticut so that they may effectively and strategically carry out their missions to meet the needs of our community.
- Advise and support our donors to fulfill their philanthropic interests.

► // What's Your Passion? continued from page 1 //



"It's not just about conservation, it's about saving the planet."
– John Pritchard

They also achieved their "forever" goal through a Charitable Gift Annuity that provides them income for life. After they are gone, the remainder will go into an endowed fund that will benefit the Lyme Land Conservation Trust in perpetuity.

"I chose to partner with the Community Foundation because they have the wherewithal to make a difference. I continue to be surprised and pleased by how they seek new ways to engage the community by serving as a convener and leader on important issues. Partnering with the Community Foundation is simply a wise investment." John currently serves on the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut Board of Trustees and has served on numerous committees.

"The Community Foundation focuses on preserving the environment as one of our four strategic priorities. We recruited John to partner with us on our mission because he is passionate about the environment, deeply knowledgeable about conservation issues and connected within the environmental community. Together with passionate people in our communities, we can have greater impact on the issues that matter most in Eastern Connecticut."

– Maryam Elahi, Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut President & CEO

Pritchard photo credit © The Nature Conservancy



The Community Foundation will hold several LeadingTOGETHER Thriving Community Conversations in 2019 in Old Lyme, Norwich, Mansfield, Willimantic, Waterford and other Eastern Connecticut towns!

Join us and your neighbors to think creatively about community interests and solutions and to work collaboratively on initiatives. If you don't already receive our email updates, sign up at www.cfct.org to receive announcements about upcoming dates and other important information.

LeadingTOGETHER: Launch of Our Thriving Community Conversations Series in Partnership with Our Public Libraries

The Community Foundation is committed to hearing the voices of our residents and to convening state leaders, experts and communities to discuss issues affecting Eastern Connecticut.

In recent years we held various Thriving Community Conversations on women, youth, animal welfare and environmental issues, as well as Connecticut's fiscal crisis and its impact on the nonprofit sector in our region.

The October 2018 conversation at Groton Public Library marked the launch of a series of "LeadingTOGETHER" Thriving Community Conversations throughout our 42-town region. Co-hosted by the Community Foundation and public libraries in our region, these sessions invite town residents to join together to discuss what they love about their towns as well as share

their concerns. The discussions inform and inspire our work while offering the opportunity for participants to think creatively about community solutions, sparking new or deeper connections to lead together for the good of our entire region.

In December, as part of this library series, the Community Foundation sponsored a book discussion at Groton Public Library on Robert Putnam's Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis. This book is a rare combination of individual testimony and rigorous evidence. Putnam provides a detailed account of the American dream that should lead to a deep examination of the future of our country. For this discussion, Laurie Wolfley, professor at UCONN Avery Point, served as the book talk facilitator. If you are interested in reading the book, copies are available at Groton Public Library.

Some of the key discussion points we heard in Groton

There was much discussion about community and economic development. With the expected increase in the workforce in Groton, the entire community infrastructure needs to be thoughtfully and collaboratively re-examined and planned, including increased public transportation, expansion of high-quality childcare, and options for residents to "age in place."

We learned more about the great plans in the works for the Groton Public Schools including two new state-of-the-art schools, expanded resources, and forward-thinking school designs that can accommodate student population increases.

The evening of rich conversation spurred much interest among the attendees in planning follow-up conversations to ensure Groton is a thriving community now and into the future.

Groton Public Library – Thriving Community Conversation:
L to R: Jon Reiner, Groton Director of Planning;
Betty Anne Reiter, Groton Public Library Director (Retired);
Maryam Elahi, CFECT President & CEO;
David Schulz, CFECT Board of Trustees Chair.



Mentoring Matters

National Mentoring Month Celebration and Inaugural Awards

The Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut, as lead partner of the **Eastern Connecticut Mentoring Collaborative (ECMC)**, celebrated National Mentoring Month with a *Mentoring Matters* celebration on January 17, 2019.

The ECMC promotes mentoring in alignment with the Community Foundation's strategic priority of empowering young people. The collaborative is a growing network of schools, youth service bureaus, nonprofits, faith communities and grassroots efforts focused on increasing connections, quality and capacity to ensure that young people in eastern Connecticut have access to caring mentors.

This first-ever event recognized people and organizations in our region that make a difference in young people's lives through mentoring.



L to R: Recipients Kristin Barnhart; Kelley Dupree (accepting on behalf of NESS); and Kevin Booker, Jr.

Outstanding Youth Mentor awards were presented to Kevin Booker, Jr. for his work with *Black Men Can* and the *Males Club* at Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School in New London, and to Kristin Barnhart for her work as a mentor and Schools

Work Coordinator for LifeFAQs.org. The **Outstanding Mentor Champion** award was presented to New England Science & Sailing (NESS) for its consistent commitment and support of youth mentoring. Congrats to Kevin, Kristin and NESS!

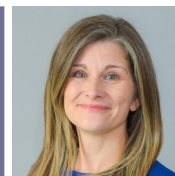
Connecticut Funders Collaborative to Promote Civic Engagement

The Connecticut Funders Collaborative is an initiative of the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut, Connecticut Council for Philanthropy, and five other Connecticut-based community foundations that seek to expand access and increase engagement of all voices in our communities to contribute to a just, equitable, and thriving society.

To help advance this work, the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut launched Civic Engagement Mini-Grants to assist residents of our 42-town region in becoming active participants in building and strengthening their communities.

For more information about our civic engagement mini-grants, visit our [website](#) or contact Program Officer Deb Battit at Deb@cfect.org.

Message from
Karla Fortunato
President, Connecticut
Council for Philanthropy



"With attacks on the free press, the judiciary, government transparency, and voter rights, we believed that the need for philanthropic action and collaboration was immediate. Maryam Elahi initiated the call to the funder community and has led the collaborative, working to expand access and increase engagement of all voices in Connecticut's communities regardless of race, ethnicity, class, age, gender, religion, physical ability, or sexual orientation. We applaud Maryam's leadership and the work of all members of the collaborative to strengthen democracy and community connections through investments in civic engagement."



Empowered Towards a Path to Success

Founded in 2008 by Beatrice Jennette, S.T.E.P.S. was created as a grassroots effort to empower girls to discover their voices and the leaders within themselves. The programs offer a combination of mentoring, leadership training and other topical workshops to girls in grades 7 to 12 in New London and Groton.

The impact in the community is clearly visible. Sheneva, a five-year participant in the program who has built her confidence with the help of program mentors, stated, "S.T.E.P.S. has helped me conquer my fears and learn not to be held back by social norms and standards. I recently became a lead facilitator in a high school mentoring program, where I became a positive influence on middle school girls. Taking on this role would not have been possible if it weren't for S.T.E.P.S. and the inspirational mentors that pushed me to always be the best I could be."

"It's so rewarding to hear, 'If it hadn't been for S.T.E.P.S., I might have taken a very different path in life.' We are so thankful to the Community Foundation for believing in the work we are doing and for being our partner as well."

– Beatrice Jennette, President of S.T.E.P.S.

To learn more about S.T.E.P.S., visit www.stepsct.org

The programs offered by S.T.E.P.S., some of which are funded through the Community Foundation's youth empowerment and Women & Girls Fund grants, provide guidance and networking that enable girls to build their confidence and leadership skills. This, in turn, helps empower them



Sheneva, a S.T.E.P.S. participant and speaker at the 10-year Anniversary Celebration, with Beatrice Jennette.

to believe that they can achieve their dreams and engage them in a variety of experiences that gives them the self-assurance that will ultimately lead to positive decision-making.

Community Foundation president Maryam Elahi was a guest speaker at the S.T.E.P.S. 10-year Anniversary Celebration this past September and noted, "The Community Foundation works to better understand the social norms and policies that we need to change in order to improve the trajectory for the many women and girls in our region who are struggling. We know these challenges are not easy, and there are no simple solutions. But as a community foundation, and as a community of caring citizens, we know that by leading together, we can make a difference on these issues."

Congratulations to S.T.E.P.S. on 10 years of empowering young women and girls to be our future leaders!

Scholarship Spotlight: Ethan Hahn Concerned About Youth Civic Engagement

Scholarship recipient Ethan Hahn grew up learning that serving one's community and country ensures that not only does *that* community thrive, but that all communities – and our democracy – thrive. "I believe that youth need to get involved and help their communities. Volunteering gives you good experience and helps people," says Ethan, who served as a dedicated junior volunteer firefighter in Colchester while in high school. "Growing up in a military family, I have always wanted to pursue a career helping others – and Massachusetts Maritime Academy was perfect for that."

Making higher education more accessible to the region's youth has long been a strategic priority for the Community Foundation. The donors of 113 scholarship funds are at the forefront of closing the funding gap, especially as tuition costs have skyrocketed over the last decade.

More than 260 students from the Community Foundation's 42-town service area received over \$700,000 in single and multi-year scholarship awards in 2018.



"By majoring in Emergency Management with a minor in Homeland Security, it opens numerous career opportunities in public service. I am so thankful to the Community Foundation for helping to make my dream a reality."

– Ethan Hahn, Colchester, CT



Community Foundation
of Eastern Connecticut

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CONNECT YOUR PASSION TO A PURPOSE

Contribute to your own or an existing fund and/or promote your Community Foundation's work throughout our region through these funds:

- A gift to the **Community Leadership Fund** helps advance our strategic efforts to support our four priority areas. It also helps us to bring together people and organizations in powerful partnerships that build up our region's nonprofits.
- A gift to the **President's Discretionary Fund** enables us to step up when leadership is needed and to get behind innovative projects as they arrive.

In addition to making a straight tax-deductible donation, there may be other tax-advantaged ways for you to make a difference:

- Transfer appreciated securities.
- Roll over up to \$100,000 of your IRA assets if you are age 70 ½ or older (*donor advised funds excluded*).
- Make gifts that produce life income, such as Charitable Remainder Trusts, Charitable Lead Trusts, and Charitable Gift Annuities.
- Donate gifts of real estate.

START A CONVERSATION TODAY

The Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut is here to help you invest in optimism and put your philanthropy into action to support your community. Call or email Alison Woods at 860.442.3572 or alison@cfect.org.

Build a Fund

Did you know that you can create a permanently endowed fund and build it up over time? You can start a fund and add to it over 3-5 years to reach the \$10,000 minimum. You can then add more as circumstances allow. A long-term plan might include a legacy provision in your estate plan or naming your fund as a beneficiary of a retirement plan or life insurance policy.

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