

## Community Investment 2018 Responsive Grants Awarded

The Valley Community Foundation (VCF) is pleased to announce that \$740,250 has been awarded as a result of its 2018 Responsive Grants process. This includes support for 11 new organizations as well as previous multi-year funding for 14 additional nonprofits. These grant dollars will help provide a reliable source of funding during a time of financial uncertainty.

"The VCF Board is pleased to serve as a catalyst and partner with local nonprofits to support worthwhile missions that serve our Valley communities," said Alan Tyma, VCF Board Chair.

Grants were awarded through VCF's Responsive Grantmaking cycle, which is done with its partner in philanthropy, The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven (TCF). The program is funded by a generous annual grant from TCF's Gates and other field of interest funds, as well as VCF's unrestricted and field of interest funds. Additionally, several of VCF's donor advised fundholders contributed from their funds to help make these grants possible. Supporting funds included: the Agape Fund, the Salvatore and Linda Tiano Coppola Family Fund, the Konwerski Family Fund, the Mary Fund, the Palazzi Family Fund, the Smythe Family Fund, the Sally and Dominick Thomas Fund, the John Tyma Fund, and the Warichar Family Fund.

In addition, VCF was one of the recipients of the 2017 DiMatteo Group's Annual Charitable Foundation Golf Tournament to support the 2018 Responsive Grant process. Working with VCF staff, the DiMatteo Group selected Valley Emergency Medical Services as the recipient of these funds.

The following is a list of the 2018 VCF Responsive Grant recipients:

**BHcare\*:** to support a Medication Assisted Therapy program at clinics in Ansonia and Branford to address the opioid epidemic. \$70,000 (VCF); \$80,000 (TCF)

**Capital for Change\*:** to support a program to provide technical assistance and loans to Greater New Haven nonprofit organizations for working

capital, cash flow, building purchase, and/or renovations and energy efficiency improvements. \$6,250 (VCF); \$18,750 (TCF)

**Derby Historical Society:** to provide general operating support to preserve, maintain and celebrate the history of Derby. \$30,000

**Griffin Hospital:** to support a 12-week education and exercise program to improve the health of individuals diagnosed with diabetes and pre-diabetes. \$25,000

**Junior Achievement of Greater Fairfield County:** to support the Life-Prep Initiative, which will provide financial education to K-12 students in Derby and Ansonia. \$80,000

**Lincoln Senior Housing:** to support the purchase and installation of an emergency generator for its 34-apartment senior living facility. \$10,000

**Naugatuck Valley Health District:** to support A Matter of Balance, a fall prevention program for older adults in the Valley. \$24,000

**Rape Crisis Center of Milford, Inc.\*:** to provide general operating support for educational programming to end sexual assault and for comprehensive and culturally competent sexual assault victim services. \$30,000 (VCF); \$45,000 (TCF)

**Valley Emergency Medical Services:** to support the purchase of Two Life Pak 15 Cardiac Monitors. \$30,000

**Wesley Heights, Inc.:** to support Mentally Engaging through Technology, a new project that will provide multi-sensory stimulation through computer technology for elderly residents with early cognitive impairment, dementia and Alzheimer's disease. \$20,000

**Yale-Griffin Prevention Research Center:** to support the Addressing Chronic Conditions in Elementary and Secondary Schools program, which will improve the identification, management, and tracking of students with chronic health conditions in the Ansonia, Derby and Shelton public schools. \$30,000

## Sponsored Events

The following events were supported with unrestricted funds by VCF this season:

### November

#### The Boys and Girls Club of the Lower Naugatuck Valley

For the 17th annual Commodore Hull Thanksgiving Day Road Race in Derby and Shelton.

#### Seymour Christmas Parade Association

For the Seymour Christmas Parade on Nov. 25th.

#### Mistletoe and Margaritas

To support the 3rd annual Adams House holiday shopping event on Nov. 27th.

### December

#### Holiday Performances

Nov. 30th – Dec. 2nd at Shelton Intermediate School to benefit St. Vincent de Paul, Adam's House and TEAM, Inc.

#### Valley Council Annual Meeting

For its 25th Anniversary Breakfast Meeting on December 4th.

#### Community Tree Lighting

For the Celebrate Shelton annual Community Tree Lighting on December 7th.

\*These specific grant recipients received funding from both VCF and TCF during the 2018 Responsive Grants cycle.



A senior citizen participates in the Mentally Engaging through Technology program to stimulate cognition and brain function.



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# Good News About the Valley

## Valley Interfaith Council Hosts Community Film Screening

Nearly 100 members of the Valley and surrounding communities attended a free film screening of the National Geographic documentary "Jerusalem" at Center Stage Theatre on the evening of October 10th presented by the Valley Interfaith Council. Following the film, attendees learned about faith and tolerance during a panel discussion featuring several religious leaders and facilitated by Kenn Harris of New Haven Healthy Start.



Panel facilitator, Kenn Harris, Director of New Haven Healthy Start, addresses attendees at the Valley Interfaith Council's first public event.

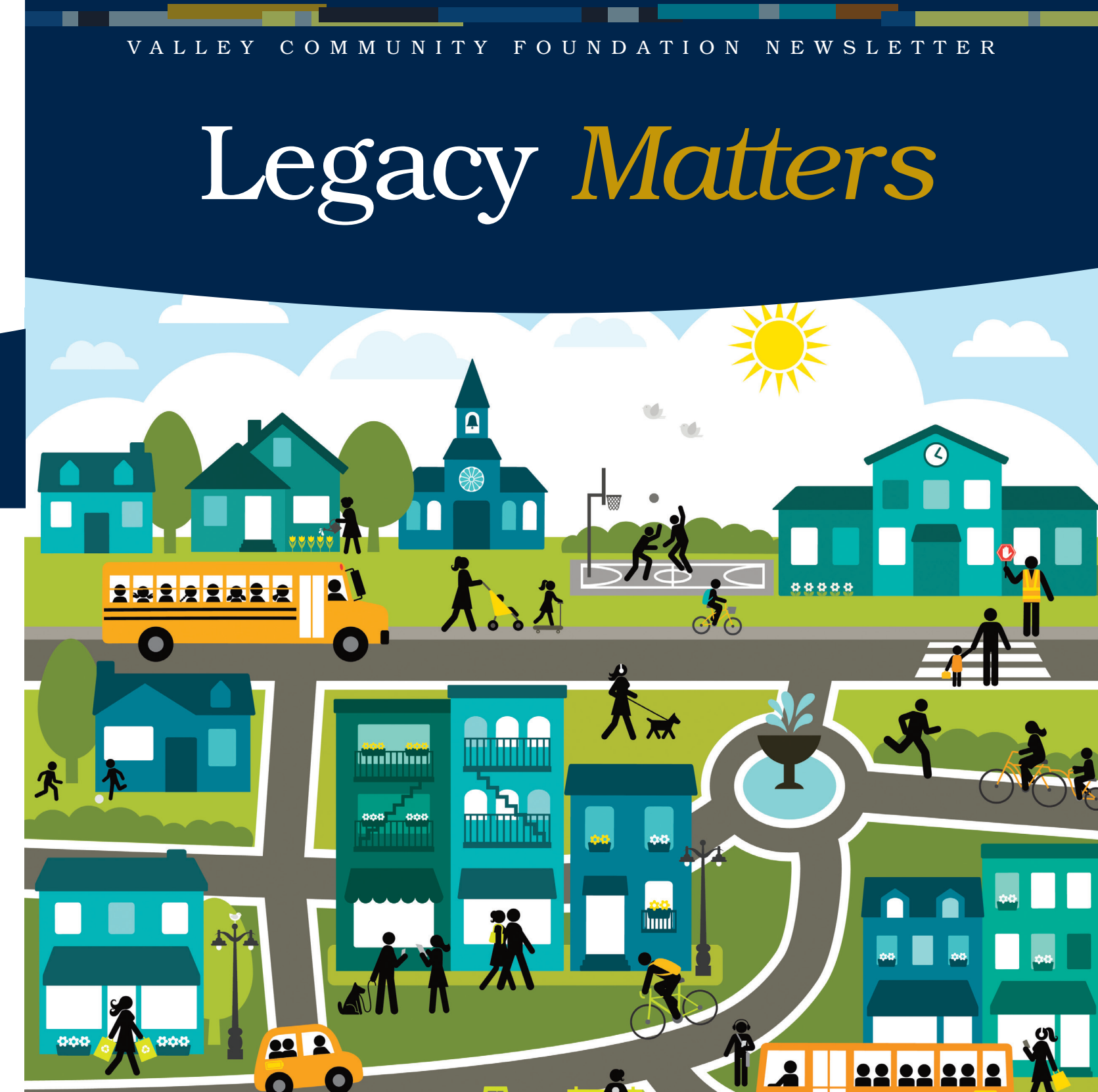
Valley Interfaith Council Vice-Chair and event coordinator, Deacon Tom Mariconda, said, "Jerusalem is considered one of the holiest places on Earth. I believe that viewing this documentary about the city helped us better understand that despite our different religious traditions and beliefs, we are all one family."

Panelists included, Imam Omer Bajwa, Director of Muslim Life in the Chaplain's Office at Yale, Rabbi Michael Farbman, Temple Emanuel in Orange, and Rev. Dr. Lisa Hahneman, Episcopal Priest serving the Diocese of Connecticut. Each have personally visited Jerusalem and shared their experiences about the Holy City with the audience.

Jerusalem is home of the world's three largest religions: Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. This

is the Council's first public event to bring further understanding and clarity about interfaith similarities and differences. It is the hope of the VIFC that this immersive and inclusive experience will help to provide more knowledge about tolerance and understanding.

Funding support for this event was made possibly from the South Central Connecticut Agency on Aging, the Valley Community Foundation, with accommodations provided by Center State Theatre.



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## Smart Investment *Civic Engagement*

## Smart Investment *Civic Engagement*

## Featured Fund

### *John A. Sabulis Memorial Scholarship*



*Shelton High School students cheer on their sports teams while dressed in pink to support the Valley Goes Pink breast cancer awareness campaign in October.*



*Seymour High School students Dibran Trepca, Sukhman Singh, Joshua Magri, and returning Junior Counselor, Jacob Liedke, attend the American Legion's Boys State Leadership Program in June 2018.*



*Richard (Dick) and Bert Belden*

We live in a world that is bigger than family, coworkers, and our circle of friends. Each of us can make a meaningful difference in that world through civic engagement. Casting a vote, volunteering on a town board, or supporting a local charity are only some examples of becoming civically engaged and these values are often instilled early in life.

Teaching children to appreciate a role in a bigger picture is an effective first step in promoting civic engagement. Dr. Beth Smith, Shelton High School Principal, and Catherine Burgholzer, social studies teacher, have developed a curriculum in response to a state requirement. As part of their studies, students learn about a range of concepts about rights and responsibilities of citizens, the rule of law, democratic principles, and the benefits of civic engagement.

Burgholzer said, “We start with ways in which students can become active members of the community through service, being a good citizen, and voting. Then, they come up with some very interesting dialogue about what that means to them.”

Dr. Smith added that the concepts are incorporated in the school’s core values and tied to community activities, such as the Valley Goes Pink campaign held every October in Seymour to raise awareness for breast cancer. “Almost every student athlete participates by wearing pink jerseys, socks, or gloves during a game. Parents also get involved and show support through booster clubs and fundraisers.”

The impact on Shelton High School students has been measurable. Many students go beyond the school’s required 10 hours of community

service each year, with some continuing their civic engagement past graduation.

According to Dr. Smith, the response has been overwhelmingly positive. “Students feel good when they’ve done something good for others and we hope we’re developing habits that will become part of their lives as they mature into adulthood. This experience expands on transferable skills, including how to become part of a team and communicating with people face to face. These are skills we teach in a K-12 setting that we hope stay with students long after high school.”

Burgholzer said one student defined civic engagement by remembering the story of the starfish—picking up one starfish stranded on a beach among hundreds and putting it back in the water made a difference to that one starfish.

“That story made a difference to the boy’s sibling. For him, being a citizen was about being a role model in his own home. That’s when you know the kids are getting it,” she said. “I think it’s important that we all take responsibility for contributing positively. We may not all have the resources to donate time or money but we can start by doing something every single day, even if it’s as small as holding a door for someone.”

Civic engagement is also inclusive of formal government. Veterans raise funds to provide juniors in high school with the chance to learn about government through the American Legion Boys State and Girls State High School Leadership Programs.

The students gather at a college—Eastern Connecticut State University for the boys and Post University for the girls—where they form political parties.

After electing officers, they develop a platform and run through a local election process. Then, they run a state-level election, experiencing for themselves what it means to run as a candidate for the Senate or House.

The students also work within the governments they form, proposing and debating bills as they attempt to create laws. The opportunity to develop leadership, speaking, and writing skills has impressed the members of the American Legion, like Erwin (Gus) Williams. “It’s amazing how they grow in that one week. When they apply for jobs later, employers can see the leadership skills they have learned and recognize its value.”

Fundraising isn’t easy but Williams feels it’s worthwhile. “I enjoy seeing students develop into the future leaders of America. When we give these young adults an opportunity to advance to levels beyond where they are now, they can take what they’ve learned, build on it, and pass it on. That’s one of the reasons why we have such a great nation.”

For some, after a career of making the community a better place, the community responds by memorializing that effort. Have you ever wondered why a name appears on a street sign or building? In the case of the Belden Cultural Center, the name reflects how Richard (Dick) O. Belden dedicated so much of his time and energy to improving his community. The dedication was given to the former Lafayette School in 2017, which is now home to the Registrar of Voters in addition to several nonprofit groups such as Center Stage Theatre, TEAM, Inc., and Valley United Way.

Jack Walsh, VCF Board Member and former Valley United Way President & COO, said, “Naming the center for Dick is fitting because of how important he was to the culture of Shelton. He was an example of everything you want in a leader.”

Belden was a lifelong resident of Shelton, alderman, and state representative to the Connecticut General Assembly who was known for his problem-solving approach. The way in which he studied issues and sought opinions on both sides of every matter delivered results that benefited the community.

Jimmy Ryan, VCF Board Member, Board Chair for The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, and former President of the Shelton Economic Development Corporation, fondly remembers Dick Belden. “He was rated as the best prepared representative, a designation that was richly deserved. When we would walk together, everyone would stop Dick and ask for his advice. He was truly an elected official who was there for the people.”

As Ryan promoted redevelopment along the river and sought highly contested financial resources, he relied on Dick’s ability to contact the right people and promote collaboration. “We made profound progress in downtown Shelton. That wouldn’t have happened as quickly as it did without Dick’s leadership. He made sure that all views were



*The Richard O. Belden Community Center in Shelton*

on the table and carefully weighed the pros and cons before making a decision. He was the model of civic engagement and we need more people like him,” said Ryan.

Belden was renowned for walking or biking up and down Long Hill Ave. in Shelton. Despite his elevated position in the community and the serious topics he would address on behalf of residents, he would still take the time to pick up a bottle or a piece of litter, making the neighborhood that tiny bit better.

The Cultural Center, located at 54 Grove St. in Shelton, contains a range of memorabilia from Dick’s life, including his chair from the House of Representatives, pictures, and plaques recognizing his many contributions to the community he was so passion about.

So what can you do? Get involved in the community in which you live or work. Vote. Serve on a local board. Contact your elected officials about topics impacting your town or city. Volunteer. The ways to participate in civic engagement are almost endless.

After spending his career as a teacher, John P. Sabulis decided the next phase of his life should begin with a new goal, and one with a dual purpose. He dedicated part of his retirement package to establish the John A. Sabulis Memorial Scholarship Fund in memory of his father, which would help local students realize not only their own career goals but recognize the value of civic engagement.

“My father was very involved with the City of Ansonia. He presided over the Board of Alderman, headed the sewer project, and was instrumental in lighting the length of Pulaski Highway. Everyone called him the Hilltop Mayor because of what he did.”

After Mr. Sabulis served in the U.S. Army Air Corps, he went on to serve his community as a police commissioner and supernumerary policeman for the Ansonia Police Department.

Inspired by his father’s level of involvement, John made a concerted effort to discover how he could do more than just remember a man who put such a high value on community engagement. “I decided on a scholarship. I could set it up to go on forever and I know that the kids that receive the support are continuing in my father’s example.”

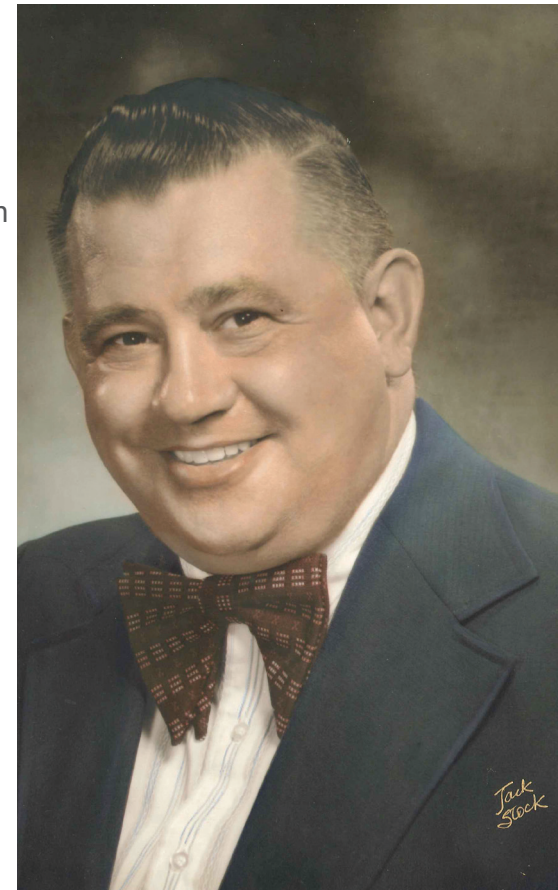
John initially set up the scholarship with the support of his brother, Stephen, at Ansonia High School. They later moved their fund to the Valley Community Foundation (VCF) where it was among the first 100 funds to be established at the then new foundation.

“I wanted to give the kids from Ansonia an advantage because I am a graduate of Ansonia High School and that’s also where I taught.”

He added, “Students who see a future in any aspect of law enforcement are eligible. We’re pretty broad about what that means because there are new careers developing all the time. So, they might pursue forensics or become a defense attorney, police officer, detective, or even enter the field of homeland security.”

Since starting the fund, John has added to it to ensure that it will exist in perpetuity.

John often meets with scholarship recipients years after they graduate and has a sense of pride in their accomplishments. “I think my father would be proud, too, not so much because of how the scholarship remembers him, but that the people in our town are



*John A. Sabulis*

benefiting. I’m just continuing what he started.”

In addition to building the scholarship, John gives back by teaching the trumpet and making sure budding musicians have access to sheet music, even if they can’t afford it. “I think everyone should give back to the community however they can. It’s an incredible feeling to do something for others.”



## Planned Giving

*Your planned gift will impact the charities you’re passionate about forever, regardless of the amount. Call us at 203-751-9162 or learn more at valleyfoundation.org*