

Legacy *Matters*



Photo by Kathleen Cei

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Smart Investment Local Journalism



Since 2009 the Valley Indy has received 34 awards from the Society of Professional Journalists.



Editor Eugene Driscoll: "People come to ValleyIndy.org for high quality, hard-hitting local journalism. They stay with us because we offer the people of the Valley a place to express opinions and share ideas."



Driscoll says his focus is on delivering quality reporting, and in so doing, increasing readership.



Reporter Ethan Fry (above) co-hosts the "Navel Gazing," podcast, which "was a smash right from the start," according to Editor Eugene Driscoll.

A thriving community depends on its members having immediate access to credible and relevant information.

One of the most widely used ways that people are connecting and staying informed in the Valley is through hyperlocal online journalism.

The Lower Naugatuck Valley was once a hotbed of competition for local coverage among three metro and several weekly publications. But that era is long gone.

Fortunately, for many communities wishing to secure access to local news, philanthropy has stepped in to bridge the gap.

A Foundation Center report shows that between 2009 and 2011, media-related grantmaking grew at a higher rate than overall domestic grantmaking (21 percent increase vs. 5.8 percent, respectively). During this period, more than 1,000 foundations made grants totaling \$1.86 billion to more than 12,000 media organizations.

The Knight Foundation was one such national foundation that was approached for funding by the collaborative efforts of the Online Journalism Project (OJP), the Valley Community Foundation (VCF) and The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven (TCF). The local partnerships paid off when Knight awarded a \$500,000 grant in 2009 through the Knight Community Information Challenge program to launch the *Valley Independent Sentinel* (ValleyIndy.org). This nonprofit, online-only news site delivers professional-quality hyperlocal online journalism focused on Ansonia, Derby, Oxford, Seymour and Shelton.

"The Valley was one of the first places in the U.S. to embrace nonprofit online local journalism," recalls the *Sentinel's* Editor Eugene Driscoll.

Driscoll says that "people come to ValleyIndy.org for high quality, hard-hitting local journalism. They stay with us because we offer the people of the Valley a place to express opinions and share ideas – whether it is on ValleyIndy.org, or on our social media accounts, or through our podcasts, which is a geek word for 'radio talk show.'"

For the past two years, the Valley Indy has livestreamed a podcast during The Great Give®, a 36-hour online fundraising event for area nonprofits, created and

supported by TCF and sponsored by VCF and others.

Driscoll and reporter Ethan Fry interview nonprofit leaders to raise awareness about the organizations' services and to seek funding from the community.

The focus on quality local reporting has been worthwhile; Driscoll says he has seen a 37 percent increase in traffic in the last year alone.

In addition to writing, editing, and posting stories online, Driscoll and Fry also use radio as a means to discuss the issues of the day.

He and Fry have created a weekly podcast, "Navel Gazing," which Driscoll says "was a smash right from the start." According to Sound Cloud, a website that hosts podcasts, "the Valley Indy podcast was played 12,326 times between March and October," Driscoll says.

The Valley Indy recently launched a second podcast, "Valley Sports Rewind," which Driscoll says had 1,651 listeners during the first two weeks of October.

VCF board member Jen Magri is a major supporter of the work of the Valley Indy: "In today's society, where the need for accurate information is critical, and the demand for it is almost instantaneous, the *Valley Independent Sentinel* has managed to successfully provide essential news and a vehicle for community conversation via the tools of the 21st century. Eugene and Ethan continue to amaze me with their ability to produce compelling content via both the written word as well as through their 'Navel Gazing' podcast."

Despite the popularity of online media, the use of hard copy is still vital to keeping members of the community informed and engaged.

That's why VCF continues to circulate a printed newsletter, *Legacy Matters*. The *Legacy Matters* newsletter is mailed to a majority of VCF fund holders and distributed to local libraries and senior centers.

"It's about reaching the community where they are," says John Ready, Donor Services & Communications Officer at VCF. "We know through the 2016 Valley Community Index that the fastest-growing population in the Valley is senior citizens, many of whom prefer receiving information in printed format."

Donor Spotlight:

The Joseph and Pauline Warichar Fund



"This Fund allows us to honor both of our parents – Joseph and Pauline Warichar [pictured at left], for building a tradition of reading and learning in our family."

– Donald Warichar

The Joseph and Pauline Warichar Memorial Scholarship Fund

More than a decade ago Derby natives Donald and Joseph Warichar Jr. established a scholarship fund at Derby High School to honor their late parents, Joseph and Pauline Warichar.

It was back in the early 90s that the brothers promised their mother they'd start a scholarship Fund, according to Joseph Warichar Jr.

"We always intended to do something like this, and now we have the time and opportunity to work with the Valley Community Foundation to make this happen," said Joseph in a 2015 interview.

The endowed Fund provides annual renewable scholarships to a graduating student of Derby High School to pursue his/her education at an accredited college or university. Scholarship recipients are described by Derby Superintendent of Schools Matthew Conway as "those who have financial need, who have demonstrated respect, kindness, and compassion for his/her fellow classmates and faculty, and who plan to study in the fields of nursing, pharmacology, or agriculture."

To ensure their community will be supported long after they are gone, the Warichar brothers have each made provisions in their wills to add to the Fund. The estate gifts will be used to establish

additional scholarships and provide grants to other charitable organizations.

Joseph Warichar Sr. died in 1952 at age 49, leaving his wife Pauline, and four children ages 3 to 17 with no father, and no family income.

"My brother Joseph, who joins me as a donor for our Fund, was a freshman at UConn studying to be a pharmacist at the time of my father's death," recalls Donald Warichar.

"He had to leave school and work to support the family. He never became a pharmacist, but instead spent 43 years as a tool maker in Bridgeport until his retirement. Our parents always wanted all of us to go on to college, and this Fund is in part a tribute to them and how much they valued higher education."

Noting the sacrifices his mother made so that her children could succeed, Donald says, "this Fund allows us to honor both of our parents for building a tradition

of reading and learning in our family. We love to encourage others to learn, and this Fund will allow us to do just that."

The Warichar brothers had such a positive experience with the family scholarship Fund that in 2012 they created the Warichar Family Fund. "We wanted to be able to address additional needs in the Valley," says Joseph. "This Fund gives us the flexibility to support organizations such as the Online Journalism Project, which is providing Valley residents with continued access to local information."

"It is heartwarming to know that a family from my hometown is so generous to help someone pursue his dreams."

– Ben S.

2015 Recipient of The Joseph and Pauline Warichar Memorial Scholarship

Sponsored Events

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

November

Commodore Hull Thanksgiving Road Race

The 15th Anniversary 5K Road Race Thanksgiving Day at the Farmers Market, 44 Canal St. in Shelton.

Toys 4 Kids Christmas Breakfast

The 12th annual toy drive to benefit local families in need on November 27 at the Yankee Clipper Barbershop in Seymour.

December

Valley Council for Health and Human Services

The Valley Council's Annual Meeting on December 6 at Brownson Country Club in Shelton.

Celebrate Shelton

The Community Tree Lighting on December 2 in Veterans Memorial Park, including hot cocoa, cookies, a performance and an appearance from Santa.

Save the Date!

Mark your calendars: **The Great Give® 2017**, a local 36-hour giving event, will take place **May 2-3, 2017**. Visit givegreater.org in the coming weeks to learn how to support your favorite nonprofits and help them win prizes!

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



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Good News About the Valley

Valley Community Foundation Awards \$595,000 in Single- and Multi-year Grants

VCF awarded \$595,000 in single- and multi-year grants in October to 13 nonprofits providing services to Valley residents. 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 field of interest funds as well as VCF field of interest funds. Additionally, 13 donor advised fundholders at VCF contributed funds to make the grants possible, including: **The John and Mary Vartelas 'AGAPE' Fund; The Bassett Family Fund; The Salvatore and Linda Tiano Coppola Family Fund; The D'Addario Family Fund; The Tyler, Brian and Zachary Haywood Fund; The Kaplan Family Fund; The Paul & Gloria Konwerski Family Fund; The Mary Fund; The Joseph A. Pagliaro Sr. Family Fund; The Palazzi Family Fund; The Sally and Dominick Thomas Fund; The John Tyma Fund; and The Warichar Family Fund.**



Valley YMCA's 5K in Ansonia.

Area Congregations Together, Inc.: to provide general operating support for the provision of food, shelter and support services to 4,000 Valley people in need; \$120,000

BHcare: to support one-time merger costs with the Lower Naugatuck Valley Parent Child Resource Center; \$70,000

Boys & Girls Club of the Lower Naugatuck Valley: to support capacity building in the areas of marketing, development, human resources and staff leadership to sustain growth of its 2,717 members; \$90,000

Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Hartford: to support the Outpatient Psychiatric Clinic for children which promotes the emotional, psychological and physical well-being of the Valley's neediest children, adolescents and their families; \$60,000

Center Stage Theatre Inc.: to provide general operating support for growth and education through performing arts programming, participation in and access to live theater; \$55,000

Central Connecticut Coast YMCA: to provide general operating support for the Valley YMCA (pictured); \$25,000

Derby Day Care Center: to support the purchase of playground equipment to meet national guidelines for

physical activity, thus reducing incidences of obesity and creating a safe space for children; \$20,000

Griffin Hospital: to support the Advance Care Planning program which ensures that patients' choices at the end of their life are known and implemented; \$20,000

Housatonic Council, Boy Scouts of America: to provide general operating support for scouting programs for 1,000 Valley youth; \$30,000

Naugatuck Valley Health District: to support Freedom2Breathe, which raises awareness about asthma and provides education about asthma to parents, caregivers, and workers in childcare settings in the Valley; \$55,000

Salvation Army, Greater Valley Corps: to support the Client Choice Food Pantry to meet its increased demand for food assistance for 4,000 individuals annually; \$20,000

Valley Emergency Medical Services: to support the replacement of a Life-Pak 15 Cardiac Monitor, a life saving tool utilized in its response to close to 6,500 requests for emergency paramedic service; \$20,000

Workplace, Inc.: to support the Ansonia and Derby American Job Centers; \$10,000