



## **NCCF's Young Philanthropists Raise Money, Make Grants to Local Organizations**

NEW CANAAN  
COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION

The Steering Committee of the Young Philanthropists Fund (YPF) at the New Canaan Community Foundation (NCCF) has completed a busy spring season of fundraising and making grants to local not-for-profit organizations. During the 2008-2009 school year, the group of twenty high-school-aged New Canaan residents met monthly to learn the process of charitable grant making and understand the world of non-profit organizations. Member of the group include students from New Canaan High School, St. Lukes School, New Canaan Country School, and the Harvey School. The YPF Committee meetings took place at different locations around Town, at not-for-profit organizations, to introduce participants to these facilities they may not have visited before, and the leaders who manage them.

YPF students explored philanthropy, leadership and community responsibility, under the leadership of NCCF Board member Jane Gamber. The main focus of the group is to learn how financial contributions to a non profit organization make an impact and how a contributor evaluates which organization to support, among many competing choices. Members of the Board of Directors and staff from the Community Foundation presented educational material to the YPF Committee, and led discussions about the principles of community leadership and philanthropy, and the importance of charitable gifts to the success of all non-profit agencies.



*Shown at the recent grant award event at Waveny House are from Left to Right: Natalie Kristoff, Cassidy Dumbauld, Ben Charas, Baily Gestal, Will Rice, Rachel Murphy, Nicola Scandiffio, Laura McCulloch, Chelsea Saggese, Faith Grabarz, and Brian Lobdell.*

*Also members of the YPF Steering Committee, but not shown, are Kelly Barker, Anjalie Christie, Jack Forese, Tommy Forese, Emily Greene, Schuyler Higgins, Matt Moran, Alex Pettee, and Katherine Pettee.*

Guest speakers in 2008 and 2009 from local organizations included Craig Panzano, Executive Director of New Canaan YMCA, who spoke about the effect of the economic downturn on area agencies. Former Director of Development Ann Billik from the New Canaan Nature Center spoke about the need to raise charitable funds from a variety of sources, and their Director of Education Keith Marshall introduced the students to one of the Center's resident birds of prey. The Committee met Alice Knapp, the new Executive Director of the New Canaan Library, shortly after her arrival in Town. YPF members saw a demonstration by a resident of the New Canaan Inn of the Wii system which was supported by a grant from NCCF's YPF last year. The Group also heard from Waveny staff member Kristin Sinatra about how the Wii system has been utilized by residents in intergenerational games. Finally, YPF also held meetings at Waveny Care Center's Main Street, the Outback Teen Center, and the NCCF Office on Locust Avenue.

In December, each member of the YPF Committee donated numerous items to fill several holiday "stockings" that were donated to needy residents in our Town. The stockings were distributed through New Canaan's Department of Human Services, and helped brighten the holidays for three local children and three elderly residents.

A highlight of the YPF year was the Saturday, May 9<sup>th</sup> fundraiser and awareness event called "The Helping Hands, A Message of Hope and Caring". Every member of the YPF Steering Committee participated in the planning and execution of this inspirational event, which took place at various locations around Town, between 10 AM and 2PM. The Committee members worked with hundreds of community residents to create banners of handprints as a message of hope and caring in our community. YPF tables were located at the Historical Society, on the way to May Fair, in front of the First Presbyterian Church, and outside Baskin Robbins Ice Cream. Through generous donations from participants who added a handprint and message to the banner, more than \$1,100 was raised to support grants to local not-for-profit organizations supported by NCCF.



*A young resident of New Canaan supporting the NCCF Young Philanthropists Fund "Helping Hands" fundraising event, by including her handprint on a banner, for a donation*

The culmination of the work of the Young Philanthropist Fund is making annual grant awards to non-profit organizations serving our community. Recommendations for the grants were made by the Fund's Steering Committee of twenty high-school aged students. The group developed their program's Request for Proposal (RFP), and distributed it to nearly forty local non-profits, inviting grant applications in the target area they selected, agencies that provide essential human services. The Committee received thirteen proposals seeking nearly \$20,000 in grant support. After careful consideration, and with guidance from Community Foundation staff and Directors, the Committee selected six organizations to receive grant funds totaling \$4,719.

Grants were awarded to

- Americares Free Clinics, to provide school physicals for young adults who have no other access to high quality health care services;
- Kids in Crisis, to support their Teen Talk program that places specially trained counselors in high school and middle school to help kids deal with personal problems, social and academic pressures and family conflict;
- New Canaan Chapter of the American Red Cross, to purchase and install an antenna which will allow the Red Cross Disaster Action Team to communicate throughout New Canaan during a disaster or emergency;
- Person to Person to fund their Emergency Assistance Program to provide financial emergency assistance to residents of New Canaan;
- Shelter for the Homeless, to provide assistance with the rising cost of food to feed their clients; and
- Star, Inc. Lighting the Way, to purchase new technologies for the Rubino Family Center for infants and pre-schoolers with developmental disabilities.

Members of the YPF Steering Committee attended the Community Foundation's annual grant distribution event to help present the awards to the organizations, and meet the representatives from the agencies they selected. They were able to hear first-hand about the impact their grants will have on the individuals served by the non-profit organizations in our area.