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While adults have always re-entered college later in life to complete deferred degrees, today they often choose a more holistic approach that considers family, work, and other matters over the time-honored two- or four-year plan.

But many more still aren’t there yet: About 180,000 Mainers who started college have never completed their degrees. The Maine Community Foundation is focusing on this group as part of its goal to advance education in Maine. We now have 18 scholarship funds that provide support to these adult learners and, together with many partners, are helping them navigate the road back to school (see p. 4).

The foundation’s focus on education has an economic underpinning: Maine needs more educated workers to fill employment gaps. The benefits are real and longterm: The lifetime earning difference between someone who holds a high school diploma and
an associate degree is $121,500, and between a high school diploma and a bachelor’s, it’s a whopping $408,500. At the same time, health outcomes, life expectancy, civic engagement (voting), and financial stability go up while poverty, unemployment rates, and incarceration go down.

As a supporting member of Educate Maine, a business-led coalition that champions college and career readiness and increased education attainment, the community foundation has helped highlight the challenges of retention and completion even as we continue to build our significant scholarship program. More than 500 funds now serve our students, to the tune of about $2.5 million in awards each year.

In this issue you will read about one of those scholarships, the David and Beverly Worthington Scholarship Fund, which supports students at Oceanside High School East in Rockland. Working with foundation staff, the Worthingtons created a scholarship that fulfills their vision of helping students over the hump.

Since my arrival at the Maine Community Foundation, I have been committed to increasing higher education attainment levels. I know the obstacles, and I understand how life gets in the way of learning. In this, my final year at the community foundation, I will keep speaking out about the importance of higher education for all Mainers. I hope you will join me.

Meredith Jones is president and CEO of the Maine Community Foundation.

On the cover: A member of the Somali Bantu Women’s Empowerment Project weaves palm leaves from Kenya to create baskets. The program advocates for economic equity and has helped advance the human dignity of women in the community. The project has received funding from the People of Color Fund, which is marking five years of grantmaking this year (see back cover).

Photo Jill Brady Photography

Opposite: Members of the Educate Maine Board of Directors meet at the third annual Pipeline to Prosperity Symposium and Leadership Luncheon in Portland.

Left to right: Hon. Jill Goldthwait, former state legislator; Karen MacDonald, King Middle School, 2014 Maine Teacher of the Year; Meredith Jones, Maine Community Foundation; J. Duke Albanese, Great Schools Partnership; Deanna Sherman, Dead River Company; Betsy Richards, IDEXX; Cari Medd, Poland Regional High School; Tim Hussey, Hussey Seating; Steve Pound, Cianbro Corp.; Peter Geiger, Geiger; Yellow Light Breen, Bangor Savings Bank; Vicki Gordon, Unum; Laurie Lachance, Thomas College; Betsy Webb, Bangor School Department; Ronald Bancroft, Bancroft & Company; Dana Humphrey, University of Maine.

Photo Tim Byrne, courtesy Educate Maine
Degrees Within Reach

The Adult Learner Partnership, launched in 2014, is a one-year pilot program that provides scholarship and grant support, along with peer learning opportunities, to organizations that help adult learners transition into two- or four-year degree-granting programs. Selected partners receive up to $5,000 from the Maine Rural Education Fund to support operations and growth and up to $15,000 in scholarship support from the Musgrave Scholarship Fund for students who enroll in the degree-granting programs.

RSU 24’s Hancock County College Transitions program at the University College at Ellsworth is one of five partners. “As we see an increase in the need of adults to complete programs or change careers,” says Lynne Witham, UC-Ellsworth center director, “we welcome this opportunity to better support their efforts and provide additional scholarships.”

Above: Students Rema Mitchell, Jeanette Cook, and Molly Orcott in the College Transitions program learn some of the fine points of a laptop from computer instructor David Gee.

Photo Joshua Winer
Many Androscoggin County students have a long-gone friend to thank for their education: Annette M. Brown, a teacher in the Lewiston-Auburn area in the early 1900s. In 1916 Brown left $16,000 in her will to establish a fund for needy students. Since then, the fund has given thousands of dollars to Androscoggin County students who are pursuing higher education. The fund was transferred to the Maine Community Foundation in 2007.

The Annette M. Brown Scholarship supports students of any age who attend two- or four-year colleges. Applicants who are the first generation of their family to attend college receive preference.

Malaga 1912 Scholarship Fund

It has been 103 years since the state of Maine evicted residents from their homes on Malaga Island, just off the coast in Phippsburg. Members of the mixed-race community were deemed a disgrace, feeble-minded—not what Maine’s growing tourism industry needed “near our front door,” said Governor Frederick Plaisted.

Five years ago, the Maine Legislature passed a resolution that expressed “profound regret” for the treatment of Malaga’s people, and last year Governor Paul LePage proposed a scholarship fund to benefit descendants of island residents. This winter, the Malaga 1912 Scholarship Fund will launch at the community foundation with seed money from the state. The fund will assist students in all stages of education, including college preparation, adult learner preparation and re-entry, and workforce retraining.

A Lasting Legacy

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David and Beverly Worthington know what it’s like to be young and have dreams. They also know the struggle students sometimes face to achieve their dreams. Having experienced their own trials early in life—dropping out of school, loading jobs onto classes—the couple understands what it means to have someone care enough to lend a hand.

Five years ago, the Worthingtons extended that hand to students at Oceanside High School East, which serves Rockland and adjoining towns, including the couple’s adopted home on the St. George peninsula. They created the Worthington Scholarship Fund to offer financial support to college-bound students.
While David ultimately ran a global seismic testing company, he dropped out of college and joined the Army so he could afford tuition.

Beverly grew up in a small Texas town and longed to be a pilot. Married young, she was attending college and flight school and caring for her children when her husband died in a plane crash. But she didn’t give up. Beverly became a commercial pilot, but only because she wasn’t alone. “I had an entire community come together to help me get going again,” she recalls.

The Worthingtons’ fund began by assisting 10 students at Oceanside and soon increased to 20. It now offers scholarships to all who qualify. By spring 2016, the couple hopes to help at least 40 members of the high school’s class of 2015 through their college years.

Scholarship applicants must have at least a “B” average and attend Maine Maritime Academy, Husson College, or any campus of the University of Maine or Maine Community College systems. And the scholarships—$1,250 per semester or approximately one-quarter the tuition of a semester at the University of Maine—begin in the second semester to ensure that students have adjusted to higher education. Students also must take a financial literacy class through Women, Work & Community.

The Maine Community Foundation’s administration of the fund has been invaluable, says David. “The scholarship staff has been professional and efficient, helping to solve the complications associated with the scholarship; all we have to worry about is coming up with the resources.”

The community foundation receives an annual letter from each recipient that describes his or her activities. These letters, notes Beverly, illuminate the impact of “giving the students a chance to go as far as they care to.” At Oceanside East, thanks to the Worthingtons, students now have a hand up.

In 2014, donors established 24 scholarship funds at the Maine Community Foundation, bringing the total to 507. Four of these new funds show the diversity of focus and geography.

**Houlton High School Alumni Association:** to support post-secondary study for graduates of Houlton High School

**Michael C. Kucsma, Jr., Memorial Scholarship Fund:** to provide training and professional development of firefighters in southern Maine

**Margaret’s Fund:** to support scholarships for adult learners at the University of Maine in Augusta

**Verona Women’s Club Fund:** to provide post-secondary scholarship support to residents of Verona Island
JOHN KAUFFMANN,
CONSERVATION CHAMPION

“To keep the great outdoors great”

When the renowned conservationist John Kauffmann (1923-2014) of Yarmouth established a charitable gift annuity at the Maine Community Foundation in 2006, he wanted to bolster his income while accomplishing his charitable objectives. He also wanted to leave a legacy, and he did: that annuity is now the Forest Society of Maine Conservation Fund.

Kauffmann recognized the key role the Forest Society of Maine plays in conserving Maine’s forests. Since its establishment 30 years ago, FSM has helped conserve a million acres in Maine. Other funds benefiting the society, including the Northern Forest Stewardship Fund, have also been established at the community foundation.

Kauffmann’s service to conservation ranges from his monumental work in Alaska’s Brooks Range to the Professorship in Parks and Environmental Ethics he established at Clemson University. In a tribute to him at a 2010 Princeton University reunion, the award-winning writer John McPhee noted that it had been his friend’s life work “to keep the great outdoors great.”
The Maine Community Foundation believes greater access to lower-cost capital can strengthen our economy, revitalize downtowns, and help entrepreneurs and innovators grow enterprises and expand projects that build on Maine’s natural assets.

To make that happen, the foundation and its donors created two new impact investing pools that focus first on impact and second on generating returns. The Farms, Fisheries and Food pool provides capital to entrepreneurs and organizations for agriculture- and fisheries-related businesses and projects. The Downtown and Business Development pool supports enterprise development and improves downtown buildings for businesses and nonprofits, especially in underserved markets.

The foundation is working with organizations and firms that have expertise in these fields and the capacity to deploy impact investing funds directly to projects and companies. For example, Coastal Enterprises Inc., recently invested in the Mayo Mill project in Dover-Foxcroft. The Fair Food Fund – a new regional fund under the nationally recognized Fair Food Network – also announced its investment in Northern Girl, the Aroostook County-based company that processes and distributes root crops from Maine farmers to retail stores and institutions across New England.

Impact investing is about relationships and partnerships – and conditions in Maine are ideal for these ventures. The foundation’s strategy is producing results now and promises to even further expand the reach and impact of philanthropy in Maine.

Peter Taylor is vice president for program development and grantmaking services at the Maine Community Foundation. This text is adapted from his commentary in Mainebiz, Dec. 1, 2014.
MaineCF: Describe some of the changes you’ve noticed in your community and how nonprofits have been part of those changes over time.

Chip Griffin: Even in high school, I remember telling people how I wanted to return to my community as a lawyer. Boothbay Harbor is now one of the oldest towns of its size in the state by median age; Lincoln County is the oldest county in Maine; and Maine is now the oldest state in the U.S.

The Boothbay Region YMCA has been the heart of our community over the past half century. Rotary and the Juniper Point Village Improvement Society launched an important community student aid fund in the 1950s and 1960s. The Boothbay Regional Ambulance Service has been in existence for almost 40 years. More recently, the Boothbay Region Land Trust, Boothbay Region Community Resources, Rebuilding Together, and Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens have helped shape and support our peninsular communities.

MaineCF: Do you have any favorite questions that you ask clients to better understand their interests, goals, and values as you put together their estate plans?

Griffin: I like to spend as much time as feasible exploring each client’s personal, family, community, and work history. This information enhances my understanding of their goals and dreams and makes me much more effective in drafting their estate planning documents.

I keep a quote by novelist Barry Lopez on my desk: “Everything is held together with stories. That is all that is holding us together, stories and compassion.” From my clients’ stories tumble forth their interests, goals, and values, essential for all planning.

MaineCF: Would you share some examples of clients who have worked with the Maine Community Foundation?

Griffin: Most clients want to leave a legacy, either for their family and succeeding generations or for charities. Often community foundation expertise is extremely important to help with particular issues, be it legal templates or other ideas, such as a donor-advised fund.
At the same time, many clients may have an idea of some area of charitable intent, but too often focus on one charity that may change over time, even though their areas of interest do not. The foundation can help prospective donors decide how to leave their funds most effectively.

**MaineCF:** The community foundation is building a Fund for Lincoln County. What are some of your hopes for those community resources over time?

**Griffin:** As Tip O’Neill put it, “All politics is local.” And politics, in the sense of the interrelationships among people, groups, and organizations, centers on charitable giving, or compassion. In Lincoln County, in the midcoast, and on the Boothbay peninsula, place and geography matter. Folks want to give locally. Widening the community to a countywide geography sometimes meets with resistance. However, I think we can benefit mutually through a countywide charitable fund and leverage the incredible talent and treasure in this county for the good of all.
CARRYING ON: A SUCCESS STORY

The People of Color Fund helps refugees channel their skills in Maine.

When Somali Bantu women fled the atrocities of Kenyan refugee camps for new lives in Lewiston, Maine, they carried a heavy weight of discrimination, fear, and physical and emotional scars.

But they also brought a reputation for hard work and resilience. Today, with grants from the Maine Community Foundation’s People of Color Fund, these women have developed an online cottage industry to sell their colorful handwoven baskets.

The People of Color Fund was established in 2007 with a $1-million gift from the River Rock Foundation. The fund has awarded 70 grants that total nearly $450,000 to help communities of color develop leadership, knowledge, and skills. Last year, the program expanded to support youth leadership initiatives and, in partnership with the Maine Health Access Foundation, projects that support health care for people of color in Maine.

The fund’s fifth anniversary of grantmaking will be celebrated in early May. For more information, please visit mainecf.org.