

Maine Ties

DONORS UNITE

A \$1-million investment in Maine farms demonstrates the power of many donors pooling resources.



Photo Bridget Besaw

The Nichols family purchased this farm in Auburn through Maine Farmland Trust's Buy/Protect/Sell Program.

Since its founding in 1983, the Maine Community Foundation and its donors have consistently supported agriculture in Maine, from local farmers' markets to statewide organizations committed to sustainable farming. In recent years, with the guidance and support of donors, the foundation has taken its commitment to another level.

In 2008, several donor advisors approached community foundation staff with a challenge: How could they make a significant impact on agriculture in Maine, beyond their traditional grantmaking? At the time, the foundation was exploring low-interest loans as a possible tool for achieving philanthropic goals. The staff subsequently met with experts in the field, who shared their knowledge and helped identify

opportunities for funding in Maine. In the end, the donors, joined by the foundation, made a \$1-million low interest loan to Maine Farmland Trust to support its Buy/Protect/Sell program. Through this program, farmland vulnerable to development is purchased, permanently preserved through an easement, then sold to farmers at a more affordable "farmland value." With support from the community foundation and its donors, Maine Farmland Trust has preserved more than 2,000 acres of farmland and placed six farms in six Maine counties into the hands of new farmers at affordable prices. The low-interest loan has also enabled the trust to leverage funds from other public and private sources and

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to expand the Buy/Protect/Sell program. "Ultimately, this means more farmers will have access to farmland," says John Piotti, Maine Farmland Trust executive director.

For donors and funders, such a program-related investment, or PRI, presents an opportunity to offer a greater level of support than might be provided through grant funds alone. "Dedicating funds to a PRI basically creates double value," states Jo D. Saffair, a Maine Community Foundation donor. "It allows us to put our philanthropic dollars to work twice: first as part of an innovative loan program and then, when the funds are repaid, in the form of grants."

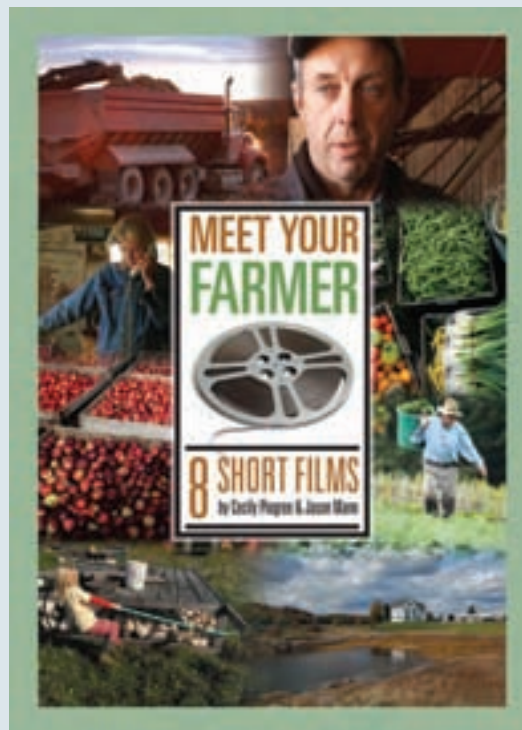
Saffair likes the idea of making loan capital available for good projects that otherwise might be challenged to find adequate and flexible financing. "Maine Community Foundation is well positioned to secure contributions from multiple parties to make something big happen," she says. "It feels good to know we're part of a large-scale conservation effort."

A fellow donor agrees: "Teaming up with others is more efficient and effective than my trying to go it alone. My philanthropic goal is to make Maine a better

"My philanthropic goal is to make Maine a better place, both physically and socially, and this aims at [accomplishing] both."

place, both physically and socially, and this aims at [accomplishing] both." Another donor saw the PRI as an opportunity to lead. "Our grant focus is on small-scale, sustainable agriculture in Maine, exclusive of land issues, but in this case we made an exception in order to show some leadership to attract other funders."

All donors agree on the importance of having Maine farmland stay in hay or crops in order to help sustain agriculture, the growing local food movement, and efforts to maintain open space. Perhaps Saffair puts it best: "I'm convinced that we will continue to improve the quality of life of Maine people, both young and old, as we protect the land that literally sustains us."



SCREENING

Meet Your Farmer

Cecily Pingree, recipient of a Maine Community Foundation Jane Morrison Film Fellowship in 2007, is one of the filmmakers responsible for making Meet Your Farmer, a documentary featuring profiles of eight farmers that was commissioned by Maine Farmland Trust. For screening dates and more information about the film, go to the trust's website, www.maineFarmlandtrust.org.

Photo courtesy MFT



Photo Jill Brady/Portland Press Herald

Meredith Jones (center) moderates a panel on “Making Maine Work” at the 32nd annual meeting of the Maine Development Foundation. Panelists (from left): Michelle Hood, president and CEO, Eastern Maine Healthcare Systems; Bruce Wagner, CEO, Barber Foods; Peter Vigue, chairman and CEO, Cianbro Corporation; and Connie Gemmer, partner, Barton & Gingold.

Getting the Message

How does a complex organization communicate its impact?

The Maine Community Foundation Board of Directors recently approved a new three-year communications plan. The purpose of communications, the plan states, is “to clearly convey our services, the impact of our grantmaking and scholarship programs, and our leadership in philanthropy to a range of audiences in order to strengthen Maine.”

But with all its moving parts, how does the community foundation convey the impact of its work? Sometimes we resort to numbers: \$1.2 million in scholarships awarded last year; 138 people from 87 Maine towns at the first ENCOrps baby boomer training session who are now working to improve their home communities; eight nonprofits working on Quality of Place projects with support from the Environmental Funders Network; one winner of the Noyce Award for Nonprofit Effectiveness.

We use traditional methods of communicating, from press releases to an annual report (which just won a Golden Arrow Award from the Maine

MaineCF is about Maine, about community, and about building a foundation for the future.

Public Relations Council), as well as new media tools, including Facebook and a blog. We’re also doing a fair amount of e-communicating, recognizing that less is more in this age of inboxes filled to the gills with messages. And we provide online resources, such as the Planned Giving Design Center for professional advisors and planned giving professionals.

We showcase our grassroots grantmaking—a local library, literacy program, summer arts camp—and also our involvement in larger issues. How will

the next governor address higher education? We helped host a forum in September to ask the candidates that question. How can we feed hungry Mainers? Our donors gave to MPBN’s “Feed Your Radio; Feed A Family” campaign to support Good Shepherd Food-Bank.

Then there’s *Maine Ties*, our newsletter. I hope this issue’s cover story inspires donors to consider new ways to expand their philanthropy; that the center spread raises awareness of education as a defining issue for the State of Maine; that professional advisors will learn from a colleague; and that you will join me in welcoming new board members.

And I hope that when someone asks you about the community foundation, you’ll have a good answer at hand. “Oh, it’s all in the name,” you might reply: “They’re about Maine, they’re about community, and they’re about building a foundation for the future.” Thanks for spreading the word.

Sign up to receive Meredith Jones’s *Real Time Community Building* blog at www.mainecef.org.

Higher Education Framing the Issue



MaineCF partners up to increase opportunities for post-secondary education throughout the state.

The Maine Community Foundation and its donors recognize the importance of higher education to the overall quality of life in Maine. To date, more than 400 scholarships have been set up at the foundation, many of them dedicated to expanding opportunities for post-secondary education. The community foundation also addresses the issue in broader terms, through its partnerships with organizations committed to increasing access to higher education for all Maine citizens.

Recently, the foundation and the Maine Compact for Higher Education commissioned the Mitchell Institute to produce a special report, "An Educated Workforce for a 21st Century Economy: Public Policy Opportunities for Higher Education in Maine." The report makes a strong case for the connection between education attainment and economic prosperity, a point underscored in a number of news stories and editorials that appeared after its release. "Post-secondary education has a powerful impact on an individual's life earnings, which also directly relates to the economic health of the entire state," wrote the *Portland Press Herald*. "That's why it's one of the key public policy challenges that faces Maine and belongs at the forefront of the gubernatorial election."

Saving for College: The Alfond Challenge

The Harold Alfond Challenge was launched three years ago with a specific mission: to encourage Maine families to add higher education to their life plans. Through the program, every baby born in Maine is offered a \$500 challenge grant to help start a college savings account. The Maine Community Foundation is one of many partners involved in this remarkable program, in which more than 5,800 babes are already enrolled.

A baby "destined for greatness" at one of a dozen casting calls held around the state to enroll families in the Harold Alfond College Challenge.

Photo Ramona DuHoux

The report highlights four opportunities for state government: to align higher education with workforce needs; to provide financial access to college; to support higher education institutions; and to encourage multiple higher education pathways. The community foundation and its partners are already involved in programs that support these opportunities. Here are a few examples.

Post-secondary education has a powerful impact on an individual's life earnings.



The Maine Development Foundation and its Maine Employers' Initiative recognized 24 employers for their efforts in supporting higher education at the Maine Compact for Higher Education's fifth Maine Symposium on Higher Education. Photo Barry Macmillan

The Maine Employers' Initiative: Investing in Higher Education

The Maine Employers' Initiative works directly with employers to encourage them to help their employees complete college degrees and professional certifications. So far, 111 Maine employers have taken steps. Collectively, they employ more than 53,000 people in the state. "There is no more critical investment to be made to ensure Maine's future prosperity than the investment in higher education, with the goal of supporting every Maine worker to achieve his or her highest potential," said Laurie Lachance, president of the Maine Development Foundation. The Maine Community Foundation has supported the initiative from the beginning, helping to obtain funding from the Ford and Lumina foundations to support its work.

Lowering Barriers: The Program for Nonprofit Effectiveness

As part of the Program for Nonprofit Effectiveness, Maine Community Foundation and Common Good Ventures are working with three organizations focused on increasing access to higher education in Maine: College for ME—Androscoggin, Literacy Volunteers of Maine, and Broadreach Family Services. The organizations are receiving grant funding from the community foundation and dedicated management coaching from Common Good Ventures.

"An Educated Workforce for a 21st Century Economy" provided the framework for a gubernatorial candidates' forum held at Unum in September. Moderated by MPBN Maine Watch host Jennifer Rooks, the forum can be viewed on the community foundation's YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/mainecommunityfdn.



Carrying Out a Client's Dreams

For Pete Dane, administering a charitable trust often entails partnerships.

In his current work with Rudman & Winchell and previous solo practice, estate and trusts attorney Nathan "Pete" Dane has worked with the Maine Community Foundation to help clients make the most of their charitable visions. In conversation with Jennifer Southard, MaineCF's director of philanthropic services, Dane describes their teamwork.

Jennifer Southard: How did you first hear about the Maine Community Foundation?

Nathan Dane: It came about through the death of a friend's daughter. The family wanted to set up a scholarship fund in her memory, and I helped administer it for the first couple of years. Over time, the family found the administration to be a burden. The community foundation assumed stewardship of the scholarship, which was a wonderful solution. Annual awards continue to be made to students interested in the arts, and the family deeply appreciates the fact that the fund they established in their child's name is having an ongoing impact on youth in the area.

MaineCF: You were a solo practitioner for many years. Do you have any advice for your colleagues?

Nathan Dane: As a solo practitioner one thinks that with enough effort, energy, and devotion one can do it all. And while theoretically possible perhaps, it's never easy. In the area of trusts and estates, when it comes down to the nitty-gritty of administering a charitable trust, I've learned that one can turn to others to handle the management. I have clients with many different interests, and the ability of the community foundation to custom design a fund and fill in the administrative blanks is a big help.

MaineCF: Establishing a trust can be complicated. Any examples come to mind?

Nathan Dane: A now deceased client wished to set up a trust to support fledgling conservation groups in her region. She did not want to give the funds directly to these young organizations, but did want to help them on an ongoing basis. At the same time, the assets needed to establish the trust were tied up in a family partnership. The only viable plan was to negotiate a sale of the client's interest to other family members, and any such sale would result in a long-term note, which is not an attractive asset for most organizations.

We approached the community foundation, which was willing to participate in the arrangement as long as we were willing to help insure that the note would eventually be paid. The note has now been paid, and the proceeds constitute a significant fund for carrying out the client's dreams.

MaineCF: So the community foundation can serve as an alternative to a private foundation.

Nathan Dane: Exactly. The community foundation is perfect for people who

do not wish to devote the substantial funds required to actually set up the administrative apparatus required for a successful private foundation, yet want to support, on an ongoing basis, those charitable activities in their community which excite them. In the Maine Community Foundation they have an organization that will always be there to insure those plans are conscientiously carried out.

"I have clients with many different interests, and the ability of the community foundation to custom design a fund and fill in the administrative blanks is a big help."



Nathan "Pete" Dane III is a 1965 graduate of Bowdoin College, spent two years in the Army, and later organized migrant farm laborers in the Missouri Delta region as a volunteer for Missions. He graduated from St. Louis University School of Law. Prior to joining Rudman & Winchell, he practiced law in Bangor for 32 years. He served on the Board of Directors of Amicus, Bangor Symphony, and the Penobscot Foundation for Developmental Services. As a resident of Deer Isle, he is on the board of Island Heritage Trust and the community advisory board of Opera House Arts, and has served on the Vestry of St. Brendan the Navigator Episcopal Church. He was a member of the Ethics Commission of the Maine Board of Bar Overseers for nine years.

New Board Members

Maker, Sanborn, and Witherspoon commit to the community foundation.

The Maine Community Foundation

elected three new members to its Board of Directors. They are Andrea Cianchette Maker of North Yarmouth, Candace Sanborn of Auburn, and John Witherspoon of Kingfield.

Maker is Vice President for Corporate Affairs at Martin's Point Health Care. She was formerly Director of Public Affairs at Champion International Corp. and an attorney at Pierce Atwood. She has been a trustee of the Susan L. Curtis Foundation; helped found the Maine Coalition for

Excellence in Education; and served on the Commission on Maine's Future. Maker is a graduate of the University of New Hampshire and the University of Maine School of Law.

Sanborn is Managing Partner at Encompass Marketing & Design, LLC, in Auburn. She is on the board of the United Way of Androscoggin County and College for ME—Androscoggin; she is also co-chair of the Maine Community Foundation's Androscoggin County Committee. Sanborn graduated from the University of Maine

and received an MBA from the University of Southern New Hampshire.

Witherspoon is President and CEO of Skowhegan Savings Bank. He was formerly CEO of the Finance Authority of Maine and President and CEO of United Kingfield Bank. He is a trustee of Carrabassett Valley Academy and sits on the Board of Visitors for the University of Maine Farmington and the board of the Maine Compact for Higher Education. Witherspoon is a University of Maine graduate.



Andrea Cianchette Maker, Candace Sanborn, and John Witherspoon join fellow board members and President and CEO Meredith Jones at the community foundation's Ellsworth office. Left to right: board member Dr. David Dixon; Witherspoon; Anne Jackson, board chair; Maker; board member Lisa Heyward; Sanborn; Eileen Epstein, board co-chair; and Jones.

Photo Carl Little



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Building Endowments

A Land Trust Challenge

Advisors to the Ram Island Conservation Fund at the Maine Community Foundation recently selected the Belgrade Regional Conservation Alliance, Georges River Land Trust, Medomak Valley Land Trust, and Sebasticook Regional Land Trust to receive \$25,000 challenge grants to help them build permanent endowments. The advisors were inspired by the community foundation's 25th anniversary endowment challenge (all 19 of the selected nonprofits successfully made their \$25,000 match).

"The grants reflect the fund advisors' concerns about the long-term financial health of land trusts in Maine," said

Meredith Jones, Maine Community Foundation president and CEO. "Now these land trusts have the means and incentive to build recurring revenue by starting or increasing their endowments."

The trusts have 18 months to meet the

challenge. The community foundation is providing technical assistance to help them develop a case for support for their campaigns and explore new advancement opportunities such as bequests and other planned gifts.

"Now these land trusts have the means and incentive to build recurring revenue."



Looking for animal signs on a snowshoe hike on the Gibson Preserve in Searsmont.

Photo courtesy Georges River Land Trust