

SUMMER 2013

# MAINE TIES

NEWS FROM THE MAINE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

1983

*30*  
years

2013



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## A PLACE IN MAINE

When NPR foreign correspondent Quil Lawrence offered his reflections on a life in journalism at the fourth annual ENCorps summit in Bar Harbor, he often referred to his home state of Maine. For this reporter who covered the fall of the Taliban in Afghanistan and the battle of Fallujah in Iraq, the town of East Benton near Waterville serves as a place for returning to roots. Lawrence recalled summers working at the Pine Tree Camp for people with disabilities located on North Pond in the Belgrade Lakes and described the house-in-progress that he works on during return visits.

Pride of place characterizes many Mainers. At a reception hosted by the community foundation at the University of Maine Museum of Art in Bangor, a panel of local leaders highlighted with passion the many cultural assets of the Queen City, from a children's museum to concerts on the waterfront. Several of the panelists moved to Bangor from elsewhere and now fervently embrace their home by the Penobscot River.

When I received an honorary doctorate in humane letters from my alma mater, the University of Maine at Augusta, I, too, felt pride of place. My undergraduate degree (as a non-traditional student) and subsequent graduate studies led to progressively responsible positions in the nonprofit sector. Those positions have led to volunteer service on boards. All of what I have done has culminated in what I do now, leading the Maine Community Foundation.

Leadership, education, place—the Maine Community Foundation is dedicated to these key elements of a durable quality of life and the underpinnings of economic strength. I can personally vouch for their importance in finding my place in Maine.

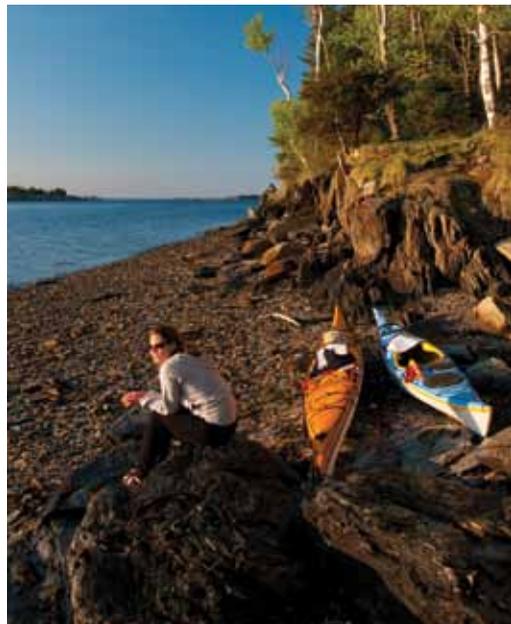
*Maine Community Foundation President and CEO Meredith Jones receives an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters at the University of Maine at Augusta's 2013 graduation ceremony. Photo by Rachel McFadden*

# TRAILS OF MAINE

*By land or by sea, a trail can open up new vistas and connect communities.*

Trails serve many purposes. They connect people and communities; they lead us through the woods; they guide our explorations. In Maine you can go from neighborhood to neighborhood on Portland Trails; hike the Appalachian Trail to the top of Mount Katahdin; or follow the Maine Art Museum Trail to discover the treasures of some of the state's museums.

The Maine Community Foundation has supported many trails over its 30 years. Donors and county advisors have recognized that these pathways help strengthen the ties that bind community. What trail are you making?



*Above: A project of the Town of Trenton and Friends of Acadia, the brand new 1.8-mile Trenton Community Trail features bog-bridging, boardwalk, and interpretive panels that point out natural and historic features along the way. Photo by Aimee Beal Church*

*Above right: Marking its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, the Maine Island Trail Association (MITA) serves as steward of the nearly 200 islands that stretch from Casco Bay to down east. The association's endowment is managed by the Maine Community Foundation. Photo by Dan Smith*

*Bottom right: Launched in 2000, the Downeast Fisheries Trail has expanded with grant support from the Hancock and Washington County Funds. A new illustrated map of the trail showcases cultural, environmental, and historical places of interest, from the Penobscot Marine Museum in Searsport to the Cobscook Bay Resource Center in Eastport. The Somesville Mill Pond Trail with its famous arched walking bridge is one stop on the itinerary. Photo by Natalie Springuel*



# THE StreetLeaders OF LEWISTON

*Two Bates graduates teach leadership  
at the Tree Street Youth Center.*



Tree Street Youth exists because Julia Sleeper saw a need and stepped up to meet it.

While an undergrad at Bates College, the Brewer native began working at Trinity Jubilee Soup Kitchen in Lewiston, helping students in its after-school homework program. At first there were only 10 kids, but “then it sort of exploded.” Even after she graduated, Sleeper continued coordinating the program.

In 2011, budget cuts forced Trinity Jubilee to drop the after-school program. Seeing a huge demand for youth services, Sleeper and Kim Sullivan, then a Bates sophomore, launched the Tree Street Summer Program, which provided a safe space for immigrant, refugee, and at-risk youth to hang out and get involved in recreational activities.

College work-study students and interns were Tree Street’s first staff members. A grant from the Maine Community Foundation’s People of Color Fund paid for the initial team of StreetLeaders, eight high

school juniors and seniors whose job was to mentor younger kids and in the process develop academic, leadership, and work skills.

The StreetLeaders program is modeled after Urban Promise, a Camden, N.J.-based youth leadership and mentoring program, which Sleeper and Sullivan adapted to fit Lewiston’s population. “In Camden I saw it working extremely well for kids in the cycle of poverty, and in the Urban Promise Miami program where the population was entirely Latino immigrant youth,” she said. “I saw that the model would work with both the immigrant and non-immigrant populations in Lewiston.”

StreetLeaders are selected through personal and group interviews and references. “The StreetLeader is a role, not a job – their role is 24/7,” Sleeper said, adding, “It holds them accountable for themselves, gives them a sense of integrity, and they learn to own their mistakes and successes.”

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## AYMAN MOHAMED: A StreetLeader's STORY

Ayman Mohamed, age 20, first showed up in Lewiston in November 2010 straight from Djibouti, unable to speak English. He went to summer school to take an ESL class, and to Tree Street every day after he was done. Sleeper saw leadership potential in him, but as a new English speaker he was still developing his skills.

The next year, Mohamed became an official StreetLeader. He graduated this spring from Lewiston High School, having completed 12 years of schooling – with excellent grades – in only three years. He started a business, a food cart to sell homemade sambusas (fried pastries filled with meat or vegetables), after attending the Androscoggin County Chamber of Commerce's Young Entrepreneurs Academy.

After two successful years as a StreetLeader, this summer Mohamed will serve as the center's first Team Leader for the expanded program, providing oversight and administrative support. This fall he starts college. An anonymous community member has paid for him to attend Central Maine Community College. When he completes his core courses, he hopes to enroll at one of the many highly competitive colleges that have accepted him. He plans to become an electrical engineer.

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*Opposite: A group of graduating senior StreetLeaders at Tree Street Youth Center's college prep graduation ceremony.*

*Above: Ayman Mohamed, center, and his family, flanked by Julia Sleeper, left, and Kim Sullivan, right, gather at the Tree Street Youth Center. Photos courtesy of Tree Street Youth.*



## BROOKSVILLE BETTERMENT

*Five community scholarship funds promote educational achievement.*

Thirteen years ago, when Mike McMillen, then a member of the Brooksville, Maine, school board, was looking for a model for a community education fund, he consulted with Sebert Brewer, chairman of the Deer Isle Foundation. Brewer advised that he contact the Maine Community Foundation.

McMillen took Brewer's lead and established a "community interest fund" at the community foundation. The relationship proved advantageous: "Because the [community foundation] takes care of the business side of running our funds," McMillen notes, "we are free to concentrate on supporting educational aspirations and achievement within the community." This division of labor and resources, he says, is "aimed at achieving a common goal: the betterment of our community through education."

Strongly influenced by a Mitchell Institute study that documented low educational aspirations in Maine's downeast coastal communities, the newly created Brooksville Education Foundation embraced a mission of increasing access to higher education by offsetting the cost of going to college.

[mainecf.org](http://mainecf.org)

Over time, five different scholarship funds have been established at the Maine Community Foundation, each with a specific educational focus. Thus far, 84 Brooksville students have received a total of \$313,000 in scholarship awards. This year the foundation has budgeted \$49,000 for scholarships, or about \$2,000 per student.

McMillen speaks with pride of the broad community support. "Over the years," he reports, "we have received financial support from more than 300 households, which is a pretty good showing for a town of 900 people." Students have said that this tangible encouragement from the community has given them added incentive to make the most of their educational opportunities. Parents, too, are positive: "They tell us that the presence of the foundation within the community is raising the educational aspirations of many families," McMillen says.

Having seen the benefits in Brooksville, McMillen would love to see other communities create similar educational resources. He stands ready to pass on the learning—and Sebert Brewer's advice—to others.

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## BROOKSVILLE EDUCATION FOUNDATION: SCHOLARSHIPS HONORING COMMUNITY LEADERS

**Maryann Snow Bates Scholarship:** The flagship fund provides scholarships to Brooksville students pursuing post-secondary education in any field at a degree-granting institution. The fund memorializes the struggles and inspiring triumphs of its namesake. A high school dropout and teenage mother, Bates eventually earned a Ph.D. and a university professorship before succumbing to cancer in her early 50s.

**Isabel Grindle Condon Scholarship:** This fund is directed primarily toward prospective teachers. Condon taught in Brooksville area schools for 37 years and was a member of the Brooksville Historical Society.

**Phyllis Ames Cox Scholarship:** This fund primarily supports students preparing for careers in veterinary medicine or international relations. Cox was a well-known philanthropist and the wife of Watergate Special Prosecutor Archibald Cox.

**Faye Austin Cosentino Scholarship:** This fund is primarily for students of nursing or history. Cosentino's illustrious nursing career included numerous articles and books, including a protocol to prevent pulmonary embolisms in new mothers. She was the first nurse to have a paper published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

**First Generation Fund:** This scholarship offers supplemental support for students who are first in their immediate families to pursue post-secondary education.

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*Brooksville Education Foundation scholarship recipients at the Bucks Harbor Yacht Club. Back row, left to right: Rob Groves, attending Plymouth State University; Kalle Bailey, Rochester Institute of Technology; Hanna Van der Eb, Wellesley College; John Ludlow, Wesleyan University. Front row, left to right: Becky Poole, Boston University; Eric McVay, Plymouth State University; Schuyler Van der Eb, University of New England; Nicole Bakeman, Bucknell University; Tynan Byrne, Art Institute of Boston at Lesley University. Photo by Tynan Byrne*

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MARKING 30 YEARS: 1983-2013

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## A FAMILY LEGACY

*Philanthropy is as deeply embedded in the Blum family as their love for Maine.*

The way Jack Blum and Alice Blum Yoakum remember it, when Ed Kaelber came to their father with the idea of launching the Maine Community Foundation, Bob pulled a \$10 bill from his wallet and made the first contribution. He soon established the Dirigo Fund at the New York Community Trust, which allowed Kaelber, recently retired as president of College of the Atlantic, to dedicate all his time and energy to establishing the community foundation.

Maine meant the world to Bob and his wife, painter Ethel Blum. Mount Desert Island had been their summer home since they first visited Ethel's father, a professor of pharmacology at Tulane Medical School, who spent summers studying the cell structures of dogfish at the Mount Desert Island Biological Laboratory. The Blums fell in love with what daughter Alice describes as "a venerable, gray farmhouse knee deep in meadow grass," a home they named Deer Acres.

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Philanthropy is as deeply embedded in the Blum family as their love for Maine. Four generations of Blums served on the board of the Institute of Arts and Sciences in Brooklyn, N.Y. Bob and Ethel Blum supported an array of cultural, environmental, and community organizations.

The Blum children continue that tradition of giving. Jack Blum was a trustee of the Jackson Laboratory, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and several schools, including Hotchkiss. Alice Yoakum was a founding member of the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation, which her father helped launch, and currently serves on the board of the Foundation for Community Health, which fosters the physical and mental health of the residents of the northwest hills region of Connecticut where she lives. “It is simply what you do,” says Yoakum. “You give back to the community.”

Maine remains in the Blum family’s hearts and sights. Jack Blum’s daughter Suzette Devine, who lives in Falmouth, has a donor-advised fund and is a member of the advisory committee for the community foundation’s Maine Expansion Arts Fund. And though the family has sold much of Deer Acres, they have turned their boathouse into a cottage for frequent visits to Maine.

Asked about the role of community foundations, Yoakum states, “They bring people together because they identify unmet local and regional needs, and help people to do something about them.” Furthermore, she says, they “stimulate an outpouring of philanthropic funding to meet those needs.”

Asked whether the Maine Community Foundation has made a difference in the lives of the communities it serves and in protecting the state’s natural resources, Yoakum and Blum reply with a resounding “Yes.” Adds the former, “You’ve come a long way, Maine Community Foundation.”



*Opposite: Ethel and Bob Blum enjoy a summer sail aboard Edel around Saddleback Island in Jericho Bay. Photo courtesy of the Blum family*

*Left: Ethel Blum, Charted Waters (Merchants Row, Maine), watercolor. College of the Atlantic’s Blum Gallery is named for the artist.*

# HELPING COUNTY CLIENTS KEEP IT LOCAL

Presque Isle attorney and former Aroostook County Committee member Richard Engels has seen how the Maine Community Foundation can help both charitable individuals and nonprofit organizations. He discusses some of his experiences in this interview with Director of Philanthropic Services Jennifer Southard.

**MaineCF:** Is there a question you typically ask potential donors?

**Richard Engels:** I usually ask if they have any charitable intent and then start talking about some things they could do. If clients haven't heard about the Maine Community Foundation before, I'll suggest that they start a donor-advised fund with the minimum amount: Start small, and if you like what happens, increase it.

**MaineCF:** How has the Maine Community Foundation been a resource for nonprofits in your area?

**Engels:** When I was chair of the Aroostook County Committee, we visited area high schools and found that a lot of them were not managing their scholarship funds sophisticatedly. Some of the funds were in checking accounts or certificates of deposit, for example. As a result of these visits, a few schools have improved their practices and several more have placed their funds with the community foundation.

**MaineCF:** Do you have a favorite community foundation client story?

**Engels:** I've worked with some people from the Ashland area who have set up funds, both for education and for community development. None of them were extremely rich, but they were making a significant contribution of their wealth in order to be able to do good.

*Dick Engels attends the groundbreaking for the Rodney Smith Wellness Center and Akeley Student Center at Northern Maine Community College in Presque Isle on May 15, 2013. The project received a grant from the Aroostook County Fund. Photo by Ken Lamb, Sham Lam Photography*



**MaineCF:** As you look back over your time on the Aroostook County Committee, do you have a favorite grant or two that the committee made?

**Engels:** We awarded a couple of grants to the Association culturelle et historique du Mont-Carmel in its efforts to restore a Roman Catholic church in the town of Lille, which is now the site of the Musée culturel du Mont-Carmel. It's an absolutely gorgeous building that would've been in ruins today but for grants like the ones we made.

**MaineCF:** Anything else you'd like to add regarding the role of the financial advisor?

**Engels:** Mentioning philanthropy early is important because some people are reticent about that topic until somebody asks them, at which point they might say, "I can't do much now, but maybe I can do some more later." Some of them actually do come back, and I try to help them make the best choices to meet their charitable goals.

*Dick Engels is an attorney with Bemis & Rossignol, LLC, in Presque Isle. He received his Bachelor's Degree from Bowdoin College and his J.D. from Columbia University. Among his many community activities, Engels is a member of the Presque Isle City Council; serves on the Eastern Maine Healthcare Systems Corporate Board; and is a co-founder, officer, and coach for Aroostook Football.*

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*On the Cover: Emily Leonard Trenholm, a participant in CSA: Community Supporting Arts, paints a landscape at Fresh Start Farms in Lewiston. Created by the Harlow Gallery and Kennebec Valley Art Association, in partnership with the Kennebec Local Food Initiative, the CSA project promoted local art and local food by partnering 14 artists with 13 community-supported agriculture farms in central Maine. The project received grant support from the community foundation's Maine Expansion Arts Fund. Photo by Michael Ferry*

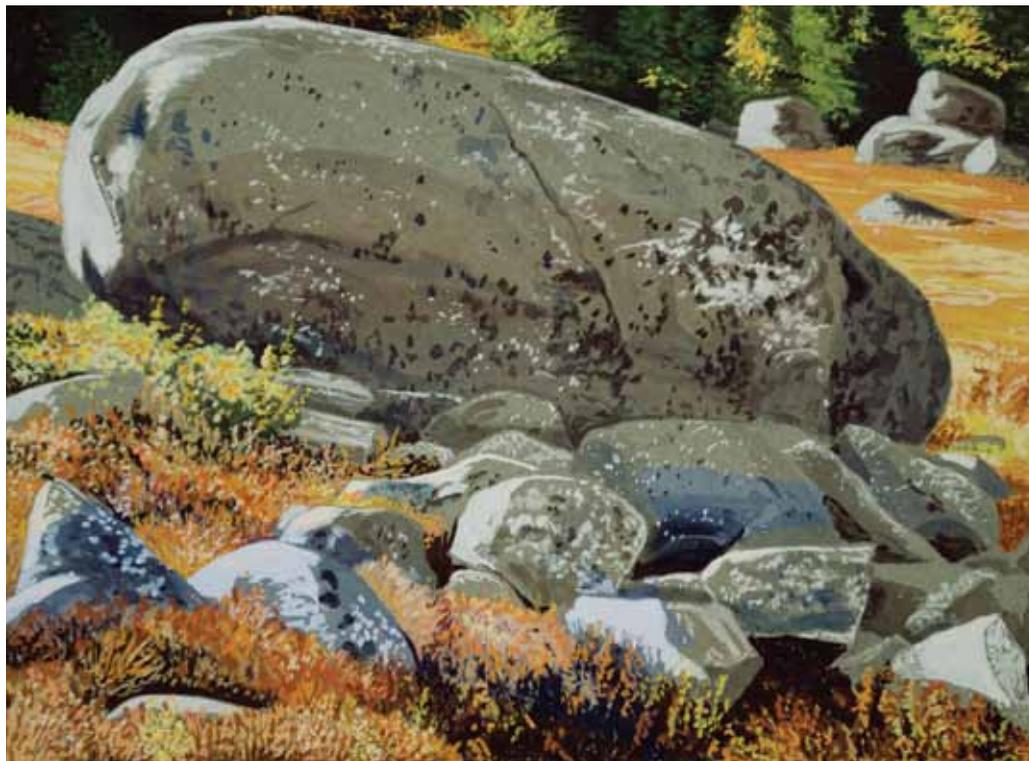
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## A PLACE IN MAINE: A CONTEST

“What happens to me when I cross the Piscataqua and plunge rapidly into Maine at the cost of seventy-five cents in tolls? I cannot describe it. I do not ordinarily spy a partridge in a pear tree, or three French hens, but I do have the sensation of having received a gift from a true love.”

—E. B. White

*Above: John Woolsey's gouache painting Big Erratic with Lichen, Brooksville, 2011, is featured in "Gift of the Glacier: The Maine Landscape" at the L.C. Bates Museum in Hinckley. The exhibition, which received support from a Maine Expansion Arts Fund grant, was co-curated by museum staff and two Colby College students and their professor Véronique Plesch. The show runs through October 15.*

What's your favorite place in Maine and why? The Maine Community Foundation invites you to share your stories about a special spot: a river bend, a point of land, an island, a street corner. We're seeking short (250-400 word) poems, essays, or reflections. If you wish, you may include a photo with your entry. We will choose three winners to publish on our website and share on our Facebook page, along with a selection of other submissions. The winning writers will receive a signed copy of *Art of Katahdin* by David Little.

Submissions should be emailed by July 30, 2013, to [mainestories@mainecf.org](mailto:mainestories@mainecf.org)

Also, if you're on Twitter, follow @mainecf. We'll be sharing our contest winners and we hope you'll tweet what you love about Maine with the hashtag #mainefaves.