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Campaign Gets Results: Record Number of Families Receive Tax Credit



"It's your money. Claim it. Save it. Grow it," stated a campaign to encourage Hartford residents to take advantage of the federal earned income tax credit (EITC), available to eligible low-income working individuals and families. And they heeded the call — a record 3,345 residents claimed more than \$1.8 million in EITC this tax season and over \$5 million in other credits and refunds with help from 14 free tax centers in the city.

Hartford saw the highest increase in taxpayers claiming the EITC among the nation's 122 largest cities. The centers served 25% more residents this year. It is estimated that those residents saved close to \$400,000 in tax preparation fees by using the free centers instead of paid preparers. More than 125 volunteers staffed the centers sponsored by the Hartford Asset Building Collaborative, with coordination from Co-opportunity.

A major objective of the campaign is to help Hartford families build assets that will enable them to reach their goals of homeownership, education, business start-ups, and more. Filers were also offered other asset-building support, such as money management assistance and information about credit basics and credit scoring. Sixty-five filers opened savings accounts through a partnership with the Hartford Federal Credit Union.

The EITC campaign is a collaborative of the Hartford Foundation, Annie E. Casey Foundation, Hartford Asset Building Collaborative, Internal Revenue Service, the Mayor's Office, and United Way of the Capital Area.

Strengthening Family Ties

Having worked as a clinician with the Community Child Guidance Clinic, Margot Duclos of South Windsor knows the value of appropriate, individualized services for children with emotional, social and behavioral problems. The Clinic has been providing such services for children and families in 14 towns east of the river since 1959.



The Duclos family — Lisa, Mark, Edward, and Margot — were on hand to celebrate the Community Child Guidance Clinic's addition.

This spring, the Clinic, located in Manchester, celebrated the opening of a new addition, which was supported by a \$200,000 grant from the Foundation in 2004. The extra space allows for enrollment of more students in its school that provides specialized educational services. Students, who are referred from their school districts, receive small group and individual instruction geared to each student's grade level, learning style and ability. The goal of the school, and the myriad other programs run by the Clinic, is to maintain each child in his or her home and community.

Margot understands the value of family ties, and was thrilled to support the Clinic with a grant from the Duclos Family Charity Trust Fund at the Hartford Foundation, to furnish the addition with vibrant works of art. This donor-advised fund was created by Margot's son and daughter-in-law, Mark and Lisa, who live in South Windsor with their two teenagers, to enable the whole family to work together to support their community.

"I've seen first-hand the difference the Clinic is making for so many families," said Margot. "Recommending the grant was easy — and only a small measure of our appreciation of the Clinic for providing mental health services in these 14 towns."

For more information about the Community Child Guidance Clinic, visit www.ccginc.org.

Excelling Despite the Odds

Benjamin Grabowicz of Tolland has succeeded beyond all expectations. When he was in elementary school, his parents were told he'd never go to college. He was diagnosed with an auditory processing disorder. His brain has difficulty interpreting the words he hears. Today, 15 years later, Benjamin is preparing for a career in elementary and special education, a journey that will start at Rivier College in the fall.

"When Benjamin began high school, he could have modified his classes to make it easier for him," said his mother, Judy. "Instead, he stayed after school 3 to 4 days a week and worked during the summer to keep up with the lessons."

"Everyone has challenges of some kind," said Benjamin. "I'm no different than any of my classmates. I don't deserve any special breaks."

Not only did Benjamin graduate high school, he was accepted to every college to which he applied. The Hartford Foundation is pleased to play a role in his college education, awarding him a scholarship from the Lebbeus F. Bissell Scholarship Fund.

A lifetime resident of Rockville and active community volunteer, Lebbeus Bissell established a scholarship fund at the Foundation in 1971. Since then, the fund has provided \$757,000 for college-bound students. Today, Lebbeus' grandson, Tom Mason of Vernon, monitors the fund and his great-granddaughter, Kristen Horrigan of Simsbury, serves on the fund's scholarship selection committee. Tom's wife, Susan, also serves on the committee. Each \$4,000 scholarship awarded from the fund is renewable for up to four years.

"Ben is exactly the kind of student my grandfather intended to help with this fund," said Tom Mason.

Each year, the Foundation awards approximately \$900,000 in scholarships to more than 350 students, including adult learners. These scholarships are awarded through more than 70 funds established by individuals, families and organizations.

To learn more about the Foundation's scholarship program and recipients, visit www.hfpg.org/scholarshipnews.

As Ben's mother said, "Ben is an example of what can be accomplished if we all work together for the benefit of a child."



Benjamin (c) stands with his parents, Bill and Judy Grabowicz (l), and Susan and Tom Mason (r) at a recent reception honoring Hartford Foundation scholarship recipients.

Foundation Meets National Standards

The Hartford Foundation has successfully passed an exhaustive review of its organizational and financial practices by the Council on Foundations, and has been found "in compliance with the National Standards of U.S. Community Foundations." For more information about the standards, visit www.hfpg.org.



Remembering a Vibrant Leader

George Bahamonde was one-of-a-kind, and his passing is a tremendous loss to our community. Many of us at the Hartford



Foundation knew and worked closely with him over the years. As a fellow funder, we shared a common goal — to better the lives of others in the Greater Hartford community through philanthropy. George was also, with his wife, Jenny, a member of our Catalyst Endowment Fund, and served on its steering committee.

We will miss his insights into the needs of the community, his passion and vibrant leadership. George, who served as the president and CEO of the United Way of the Capital Area for 12 years, passed away on July 20 while vacationing in Maine.

Agency Receives Help with Finding a New Executive Director

In early 2005, the Antiquarian and Landmarks Society was in need of a new executive director, and wanted to take the opportunity to assess exactly what the organization needed in a leader.

At the same time, the Hartford Foundation's Nonprofit Support Program, along with other funders in Southern New England, launched the Executive Transition Program, a unique partnership combining funding from NSP with services provided by Third Sector New England to help agencies manage the entire executive transition process. Services provided include transition assessment and planning with the board, assistance with the executive search, and coaching for the board and new executive director.

The timing was perfect for the Antiquarian & Landmarks Society, which was awarded a \$10,000 executive transition grant.

"The program led us through a thorough analysis of what we wanted in an executive director," said Lee Kuckro, board chairman. "We walked away with a firmer position on where we wanted to take the organization and what kind of person could lead the way."

Sheryl Hack, who began her role as executive director in August of 2005, says, "I was struck by how well orchestrated the search process was and how the goals of the organization were so clearly defined. That really indicated to me that the Antiquarian & Landmarks Society is a well-run organization — and the kind of agency I want to be a part of."

For more information about the executive transitions program, visit www.hfpg.org/nsp and click on Our Services.

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In Other News



Bonnie J. Malley joined the Foundation's Board of Directors in March. A senior vice president of The Phoenix Companies, Inc., Bonnie is responsible for human resources, administrative services, and corporate real estate. She also serves on the board of the National Conference for Community and Justice, and previously served on the board of the Urban League of Greater Hartford, Inc.



Lori G. Rabb has been named vice president for philanthropic services. Lori has been senior philanthropic services officer at the Foundation since September 2004. With 20 years of experience in charitable planning, Lori has served as northeast regional director for Jewish Theological Seminary, and chief development officer for both the Jewish Federation of Greater Hartford and Jewish Community Foundation.



Judith McBride has joined the Foundation as program officer. She has over two decades of experience in criminal justice, mental health, civil rights and other public policy issues in both the government and nonprofit sectors. Judy has held senior positions at the U.S. Department of Justice's grantmaking office, YouthBuild USA, and Family Justice.



Dr. Estela R. López, chair of the Latino Endowment Fund at the Foundation, has been named Latina citizen of the year by the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission. **Pete Rosa**, program officer, received an award of achievement from the Connecticut Puerto Rican Forum. Estela and Pete are being recognized for their efforts to advance the social and economic well-being of the Latino community in Connecticut.



In Fond Memory

Like many volunteers at the Hartford Foundation, Bob Haller was also active with many area nonprofits. In addition to serving on the Foundation's Catalyst Steering Committee from 2002 until his death in April of this year, Bob was a



corporator of the Hartford Seminary and chairman of the board for the Salvation Army. Bob also got involved on a person-to-person basis — he read to kindergarteners at a Hartford elementary school through the Parent Leadership Training Institute, which has established the Robert Haller Memorial Award for Outstanding Community Service. Bob and his wife, Wendy, joined the Catalyst Endowment Fund in 1997 and remained members ever since. Bob's contributions — to the Foundation and the region — are greatly appreciated. He will be missed.