

# The Tribune Democrat, Johnstown, PA

July 5, 2011

## Community Foundation Sees the Big Picture

*Editorial*

*Mike Kane*

“Those of us of a certain age will remember the famous line that came from the satirical comic strip Pogo, “We have met the enemy and it is us.” No community, including ours, could deny sometimes being guilty of that dynamic. But when we focus on only that, we are fixed on a section of a picture, not the whole.

Having the privilege of being at the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies, we often get to conclude that “We have met our friends and we are they.” We get to see the whole on a daily basis.

I say this because of our inspiring donors and the work our grantees do.

Our fiscal year ended June 30. Donors contributed \$5.7 million to the foundation this year. That is a big number, and it can't help but make you see the bigger picture.

To be clear, you and your neighbors gave it to us.

We had other help, too, from other foundations we work with for community betterment.

If you take away the outside support of about \$2.4 million (we hope that never happens!), that still leaves \$3.3 million in local support from you and your neighbors.

For example, in Somerset County, donors raised \$200,000 to double a fund restricted to supporting projects there.

Even more important is that we distributed on your behalf (and that of the other foundations) more than \$3 million for the first time.

That is a big number, too, so a big part of the picture is seeing where that money went. Scholarships accounted for \$425,000—which we were able to match with an additional \$76,000 through the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency's PATH program.

A little more than \$1.5 million was distributed through donor-advised, -designated and -directed grants. More than \$200,000 was distributed through the unrestricted grant-making our volunteer distribution committee helps with.

This support covered Bedford, Cambria, Somerset and parts of Indiana counties.

The balance went to the grant-making done by our affiliate organization, the Foundation for Pennsylvania Watersheds, which makes grants throughout central and western Pennsylvania to watershed groups.

What did we help our donors support, specifically?

Emergency home heating, food and clothing, after-school programs, cultural programs, fitness programs, leadership programs.

We supported food gardens, playgrounds and trails. We supported counseling services and reading programs. We even supported the area's first dog park, which will be dedicated Sunday in Sandyvale.

We enthusiastically supported the projects that Lift Johnstown is working to get accomplished.

We continued our participation in the Community Intervention/Goodwill GoodGuides mentoring initiative that now has more than 120 caring adults matched with our young people. (Mentors are local heroes. Go to [www.liftjohnstown.org](http://www.liftjohnstown.org) to become a hero. There are kids waiting to be matched.)

Another significant grant was made for the United Way of Bedford County and the United Way of Laurel Highlands, which serves Somerset and Cambria counties, to help implement a 211 call-in referral system for human services—this will provide better access for needy families and more accountability from the human service agencies providing services.

A full list of this year's grants and our donors will be published later this summer.

Finally, the foundation's overall assets are growing.

We have exceeded \$44.5 million in total assets, a 13 percent increase over last year.

This is happening because a community is working to care for itself and its future. We know—our donors know—our community has challenges and sometimes we are our own obstacles, to paraphrase Pogo. Still, at the Community Foundation, we also see the good efforts of our local nonprofits and the selfless good intentions of our donors.

That's the big picture we see. Thank you, our friends, for being a part of it. To everyone else, smile: We would love to be a part of the picture, too.

*Mike Kane is executive director of the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies, a nonprofit public foundation based in Johnstown that supports charitable interests in Bedford, Cambria and Somerset counties, as well as certain interests in Indiana County.*