

# Legacy *Matters*



in this issue: Mar/Apr 2016

**Smart Investment:**  
Valley Workforce  
Training

**Donor Spotlight:**  
Women in  
Networking  
(WIN) Fund

**Good News**  
About the Valley:  
The Great Give®

FOR GOOD FOR EVER FOR THE VALLEY



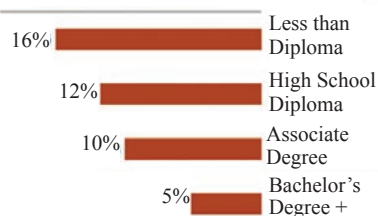
# Smart Investment: Valley Workforce Training



*The WorkPlace provides “mobilized” workforce and job-readiness training throughout the region via its 38-foot American Job Center Career Coach (above). More traditional classes for students interested in healthcare jobs are conducted in classrooms at the Health CareRx Academy (below).*



Unemployment Rate by Education, 2013



*The WorkPlace’s “Education Pays” chart shows that in 2013 the unemployment rate for residents in Southwest CT who didn’t finish high school was triple (16%) the unemployment rate for residents who held a Bachelor’s degree (5%). You can find the full 2013 and 2014 “Education Pays” charts at [www.valleyfoundation.org](http://www.valleyfoundation.org).*



*TEAM’s Gaining Access to Independence Now (GAIN) initiative is a pilot program involving partnerships with businesses and organizations throughout the region to help unemployed and underemployed individuals currently on temporary family assistance get back into the workforce.*

According to *The Valley Now: A 2015 Snapshot*, the rate of job creation in the Valley region exceeded the state average from 2002 - 2012.

This was largely due to a doubling of healthcare industry jobs. But, salaries often associated with those jobs are not considered living wages (approximately a \$40,000 full-time annual salary in CT). In fact, one in three Valley households struggled to make ends meet in 2012, according to the *2015 Snapshot*.

The most recent data compiled by the Pew Charitable Trust suggests a middle-class household income is between \$45,000 and \$134,000 in CT. The average Valley wage, as also indicated by the *2015 Snapshot*, was \$63,000. Costs associated with housing, childcare, food, transportation, healthcare and other daily living expenses challenge a family’s ability to maintain a middle-class status.

“History has typically indicated that everyone benefits when there is a growing middle class,” says Joseph Carbone, President & CEO of The WorkPlace Inc. “When we see a shrinking of the middle class, that portends great tragedy.”

The WorkPlace, as one of five Workforce Development Boards in CT, prepares people, through a life-long learning model, for sustainable careers with higher earning power.

“The more expertise you have, the more insulated you are from the negative impact of unemployment,” explains Carbone, citing The WorkPlace’s coordinated system of education and training in order to develop a workforce that can compete in a volatile global marketplace.

The WorkPlace’s Health CareRx Academy provides training and career development for people looking to advance on career ladders within the healthcare industry.

“We take low-income workers and get them on a trajectory to where the middle class is in view,” explains Carbone. “Say someone receives training to become a certified nursing assistant, for example. We consider it a loss if they do not advance their career path further, knowing they need continuing education to earn a living wage.”

Working closely with regional workforce development programs in the Valley and Southwest CT is Lori-lynn Chatlos, Regional Business Services Specialist for the CT Department of Labor.

“My work involves helping companies maintain or increase their competitiveness and supporting employers and staff through temporary declines in business,” she says. “We offer grants, tax incentives and technical advice to employers investing in the skills of their workforce.”

Both Carbone and Chatlos agree that the Valley region is in a unique position as the economic and job landscape across the state and nation changes.

“There is more affordable land and space, as well as working population, for businesses looking to operate in CT,” Carbone says. “Elected officials and community leaders are in tune with that, and that gives me optimism.”

“There are opportunities to expand our advanced manufacturing sector, attract tourism and produce more talent in the construction trades – especially in growing areas such as green and rehabilitative construction,” Chatlos says. “Valley towns already collaborate, as evident in the Brownfield Redevelopment projects completed or underway.”

In many cases, developing a competent and ready workforce takes a holistic approach. TEAM Inc. has been piloting the Gaining Access to Independence Now (GAIN) initiative over the last 18 months, collaborating with stakeholders in the community, such as Griffin Hospital and Valley Regional Adult Education. Those partners use their expertise in workforce preparation and employer connections. TEAM also provides case management to the target population of eligible individuals residing in the Greater Valley region. TEAM’s work includes comprehensive assessments for barriers to employment, such as basic employability skills, childcare and transportation, and assists participants to develop action plans for training, education and job placement.

“We recognize that a strong economy is directly linked to a resident’s individual and family well-being,” explains TEAM’s President & CEO David Morgan. “We must continue to draw from the Valley’s exceptional talent base for future growth.”

# Donor Spotlight: *Women in Networking (WIN) Fund*



*L-R: Sharon Massafra (Chair of WIN Grant Committee), with grant recipients Samonna Jones (Party Unique Boutique) & daughter, Tracy Tenpenny (Tea with Tracy), Alyssa DeMatteo (Wildflour Confections), Mary Jo Romano (Chair of WIN), Bill Purcell (President, Greater Valley Chamber of Commerce)*

It all started in with a group of women sitting around a table.

They were business owners, account reps and salespeople, entrepreneurs and professionals. They had joined the networking group to talk about being in business in the Valley. It only happened by chance that they were all women.

"And we realized that the conversations we were having in our group of all women were powerful, and we wanted them to stay that way," explains Nancie Gray, Vice President of the Greater Valley Chamber of Commerce and staff liaison to the Women in Networking Group (WIN) since its inception at the Chamber nearly 15 years ago.

"It's been remarkable to watch the group take a leadership role," comments Chamber President Bill Purcell. "They are building relationships in the community and have become a philanthropic leader as well, with the creation of the fund at the Valley Community Foundation.

The Women in Networking (WIN) Fund was established at VCF in 2007, to provide small grants to support women who are starting a new business in the Valley or looking to expand an existing business.

"You're not going to go to the bank for a \$500 loan," Gray explains what compelled the networking group to pool their funds and offer just that – a \$500 grant to a woman needing support for her new business. "Sometimes it's only that few hundred dollars – or \$1,000 – that you need to get your business to the next level."

Grants may be used for expenses such as equipment, tuition, books, transportation, uniforms or business attire or childcare necessary to reach the applicant's career goals.

Establishing a fund at VCF means the support to small women-owned businesses in the Valley can continue in perpetuity.

"We wanted to make sure that women entrepreneurs get support, even if we're not here," Gray says.

Entrepreneurs like Alyssa DeMatteo, who just celebrated the one-year anniversary of her business, Wildflour Confections in Seymour, are grateful.

"Being a member of the WIN group is invaluable; the connections I made within the group are worth it," DeMatteo says of the networking and mentorship she has received from other members of WIN. "If they can't help you, they know someone who can."

WIN granted DeMatteo a small scholarship to attend the eight-week Passion to Profit Program conducted by the Women's Business Development Council, after which she was able to resubmit her grant application and was awarded a grant to upgrade Wildflour's kitchen.

"I learned how to have things in place in case of an emergency, keeping my staff aware in situations like that, things I didn't even think of," DeMatteo explains.

"Women-owned businesses are a driving force in the U.S. economy and here in the Valley," Purcell says. "We're here to support that."

*"We are grooming our young professionals and the next generation of women leaders."*

*- Nancie Gray, Greater Valley Chamber of Commerce*

## Sponsored Events April

### Oxford Historical Society

The Sheep-to-Shawl Festival runs April 16-17 at the Twitchell-Rowland Homestead. Visit [www.oxford-historical-society.org](http://www.oxford-historical-society.org) for more information.

### TEAM Inc.

On April 23<sup>rd</sup>, the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Men Who Cook event is at 6:00 pm at Warsaw Park in Ansonia. Visit [www.teaminc.org](http://www.teaminc.org) for tickets.

## May

### Oxford Cultural Arts Commission

The Oxford FACE (Festival of Art, Culture and Entertainment) runs May 20-22 at Oxford Town Hall. Visit [www.oxfordculturalarts.org](http://www.oxfordculturalarts.org).

### MovingWithHOPE

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual CT Bike for Hope ride starts at 8:00 am Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup> from Shelton Veterans' Memorial Park. For more info, visit [www.ctbikeforhope.org](http://www.ctbikeforhope.org).

## Save the Date!

Join us for VCF's 12th Annual Reception at 5:00 pm Thursday, April 28<sup>th</sup> at the Brownson Country Club in Shelton. To learn more and register, visit [www.valleyfoundation.org](http://www.valleyfoundation.org).

## Planned Giving

*Your planned gift will impact the charities you're passionate about forever, regardless of the amount.*

*VCF welcomes Robert Lang to the Gates Society, the Foundation's planned giving community.*

*Call us at 203-751-9162 or learn more at [www.valleyfoundation.org](http://www.valleyfoundation.org)!*





253-A Elizabeth Street  
Derby, CT 06418

p: 203-751-9162 • f: 203-751-9352  
WWW.VALLEYFOUNDATION.ORG

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Bridgeport, CT  
Permit No. 347

# Good News About the Valley

## Mark your calendars!



A 36-hour, online-giving event  
on **giveGreater.org**



The Community Foundation  
for Greater New Haven



**GIVE LOCAL  
AMERICA!**

HELP NONPROFITS IN THE VALLEY  
AND GREATER NEW HAVEN WIN  
THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS!

\$190,000+ in matching funds and prizes for  
participating nonprofits that raise the most  
money, attract the most donors and more.

If your company would like to sponsor a matching  
prize, please call John Ready at 203-751-9162.

STARTS May 3rd 8:00 AM | **thegreatgive.org** | ENDS May 4th 8:00 PM