

# News Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts announces a series of grants**

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**Fitchburg, MA** (July 27, 2010) – The Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts made 10 grants from its general endowment, announced during a press event held Wednesday morning in its Fitchburg offices.

The City of Leominster received \$5,000 for its initiative, Artist Gateway, which seeks to create economic development activity by introducing local arts and culture to the downtown area. “Every artist is indeed their own small business and has clientele – many outside Leominster. We want to bring those people to Leominster to explore restaurants and shops, while visiting their favorite artist,” said Wendy Wiiks, grant administrator for the City of Leominster.

A \$16,000 grant to the Fitchburg State College Foundation will fund a summer reading clinic. The pilot program will serve a dual purpose, to provide continued assessment and intensive instructional interventions for 25 economically disadvantaged students with low reading achievement scores in grades K-8 from Fitchburg, while providing professional development for licensed teachers working toward an additional license as a reading specialist.

Habitat for Humanity of North Central Massachusetts will use its \$20,000 grant as start-up funds for Habitat ReStore, a retail store that will sell donated new and gently used items, such as doors, windows, kitchen cabinets, appliances and furniture, at 50 to 80 percent below retail. The Fitchburg-based nonprofit will use the proceeds to provide additional support to build affordable housing.

Montachusett Interfaith Hospitality Network, which provides emergency housing, will use its \$20,000 grant to fund the engineering and design of a sprinkler system for its facility at 196 Mechanic St. in Leominster, MA.

A \$10,000 grant to Veteran Homestead, Inc. will provide funding for its Northeast Veteran Training and Rehabilitation Center (NVTRC) in Gardner. The facility has room for up to 20 veterans and their families, or as many as 60 single veterans, who receive ongoing family support during the rehabilitation process. The NVTRC is the first such facility to simultaneously offer counseling, therapy and vocational skills to wounded soldiers; it will operate out of Mount Wachusett Community College.

A \$20,000 grant to Young Women's Christian Association of Central Massachusetts' Battered Women Resources will allow for the expansion of their high-risk response model for domestic violence to Gardner and Winchendon. The program was launched in 2008, in partnership with the Ayer District Court. The teams include police chiefs, medical professionals, and court personnel, all of whom receive specialized training.

Growing Places Garden Project, Inc. (GPGP) of Clinton will provide 10 new households with vegetable gardens that they will grow and maintain for their families, through a \$5,000 grant. GPGP's mission is to help people of limited economics means learn to grow their own food and make nutritious choices about food consumption.

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Just Understand My Potential, Inc., of Harvard, will use its \$18,400 grant to fund Leave No Trace Outdoor Ethics, a program that will teach 32 youths basic outdoor skills, in addition to overnight hikes. The participants will learn how to set up a shelter, read a map, dress properly for the outdoors, pack a backpack, and other basic skills.

North County Land Trust, Leominster, in collaboration with the Nashua River Watershed Association and the Massachusetts Audubon Society, received a \$20,000 grant that will bring a professional team of experienced, dedicated science educators to Fitchburg's Longsjo Middle School and Crocker Elementary School.

At Crocker Elementary School, approximately 75 students in grades 3 and 4 will participate in an after-school environmental enrichment program, over four to six sessions during the 2010-2011 school year. Some 165 students in grades 5 and 6, from The Longsjo Middle School, will participate in the NRWA's "Scientist-in-Residence" program, over four to six sessions during the school day, supplemented by two field trips.

The Pat Brody Shelter of Lunenburg will offer a spay/neuter clinic for cats to low-income residents of Fitchburg and Leominster with its \$5,000 grant. In addition to providing services to domestic cats, stray colonies will be trapped and altered. All adoptable cats will be sheltered in their facilities, and healthy feral cats will be released back into the community to live out their lives.

Since its inception, the foundation has awarded \$15 million in grants and distributions from 120 funds that have been established by individuals, families and organizations.

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## **About**

The Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts, with over \$20 million in charitable assets, was created in 2001 to serve the charitable interest of donors in Ashburnham, Ashby, Athol, Ayer, Barre, Devens, Erving, Fitchburg, Gardner, Groton, Harvard, Hubbardston, Lancaster, Leominster, Littleton, Lunenburg, New Salem, Orange, Pepperell, Petersham, Phillipston, Princeton, Royalston, Shirley, Sterling, Templeton, Townsend, Warwick, Wendell, Westminster and Winchendon.