



theSteward

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Dead Center

Aiming to revitalize our village business districts



Clockwise from left: Canaan, Cornwall, Salisbury, Kent

Stroll down Main Street in almost any town in the Northwest Corner and you will see evidence everywhere that hard times have come this way. “Closed,” “Final Sale,” “For Rent,” “Going Out of Business”—the unhappy signs of recession are all around. In some towns the commercial centers have been crippled; others seem to have given up the ghost altogether.

But now comes the Village Center Vitality Project. As the name suggests, this undertaking is a concerted effort to help eight villages in the Northwest Corner bring new life to business centers stunted by the severe economic downturn. The campaign was conceived by the Northwestern Connecticut Regional Planning Collaborative and will focus on the towns of Canaan, Salisbury, Falls Village, Norfolk, Cornwall, Kent, Sharon, and Goshen. The notion behind this effort is to find ideas—practical ideas, imaginative ideas, attractive ideas, tried and true ideas, new ideas—that will encourage new business investment and help established but ailing businesses make a comeback.

The Community Foundation has awarded a \$12,000 grant to fund the initial phase of the campaign. In this phase the

Collaborative will work with a well-known New York planning and economic development consultant to identify possible regulatory incentives and improvements, fresh marketing ideas, municipal investments, village enhancements, and ways of engaging with local residents in all eight towns. Focus groups will also be convened to bring local commercial interests together with town leaders to identify the key issues influencing village and regional economic vitality.

Ruth Skovran, a member of the Falls Village Planning and Zoning Commission and one of the leaders of the regional planning collaborative, described how the initiative would proceed if all goes according to plan. “The Foundation’s grant was crucial,” she said. “It provides us with the wherewithal

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A Letter

Now and then we get a letter that brightens the day, such as this one from a woman in Bantam. The Foundation was one of four local charitable organizations that joined forces to pay for the letter-writer’s eye operation.





THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
of NORTHWEST CONNECTICUT

First-Cycle Grants / 2010

The Foundation makes grants to local nonprofit organizations three times a year, in early spring, late June and late fall. Scholarships are awarded annually in June. The first-cycle grants were:

Litchfield Performing Arts

\$1,400 | to support "Jazz in July in Kent"
(from the Carlton D. and Jenny R. Fyler Fund)

Music Mountain

\$1,500 (matching) | for master classes for Torrington orchestra students (Fyler Fund)

Torrington Symphony Orchestra

\$1,500 (matching) | for a pair of timpani drums
(from the Eva M. Coty Fund)

YMCA Camp Mohawk

\$2,000 | to enhance the performing arts facility
(Coty Fund)

F.O.L.K.S. (Friends of Lee H. Kellogg School)

\$1,862 | for a school trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art
(from the N.W. Connecticut Philanthropy Fund)

Housatonic Child Care Center

\$2,000 (matching) | for tuition assistance for low-income families (from the Margaret C. Tupper Fund)

Literacy Volunteers

\$1,525 (matching) | to support program/student assessment
(from the Feliciano and Lydia Turri Zaccheo Fund)

Pearson School P.T.O.

\$1,500 (matching) | for a performing arts stage curtain (from the John Brooks and Brooks Bank Funds)

The Salisbury Forum

\$1,800 | to support a political forum on the current presidency
(from the Ruth and Robert Cron Endowment Fund; from the N.W. Connecticut Philanthropy/Scoville Fund; from the Pierpont Chapter #4 Order of Eastern Star Fund)

Audubon Sharon

\$2,300 | for radiant heat panels in four outdoor raptor aviaries
(Coty Fund)

Charlotte Hungerford Hospital

\$50,000 (over 5 years) | to support a capital campaign for the Patient Care Support Network (from the Edwin M. and Edith H. Stone Fund)

Greenwoods Counseling Referrals

\$4,000 (over 2 years) | for mental health care
(from the Robert Venn Carr Jr. Fund)

Canaan Child Care

\$3,120 | for an inter-generational program (transportation)
(from the Marion Wm. and Alice Edwards Fund)

Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation

\$2,500 | to support the 2010 Nonprofit Learning Program
(Edwards Fund)

DONOR PROFILE

Diane and Jeffrey Johnson



Jeff and Diane Johnson are the kind of people who make you feel good just by being around them. They are happy people. They are also accomplished, interested, friendly, smart, and generous.

This last trait has led them to establish a scholarship fund at the Foundation for high school seniors who live in Goshen, the Johnson's home town in retirement. The scholarship is intended to help students, particularly late bloomers, who have been accepted at any kind of school beyond high school and who have a demonstrable financial need.

"We just wanted to give something back to the community and this seems like a good way to do it," Mr. Johnson says. "I only wish it were more," he said, "but we hope to supplement the fund as the market re-

turns to something like normal."

Jeff Johnson, a graduate of Yale and its law school, retired as a partner in a prestigious New York law firm after spending eight years in England where he built the firm's London office into a 60-lawyer practice. The Johnson's home, a recreation of an eighteenth century house, is full of memorabilia of their years abroad, including a collection of English landscape paintings.

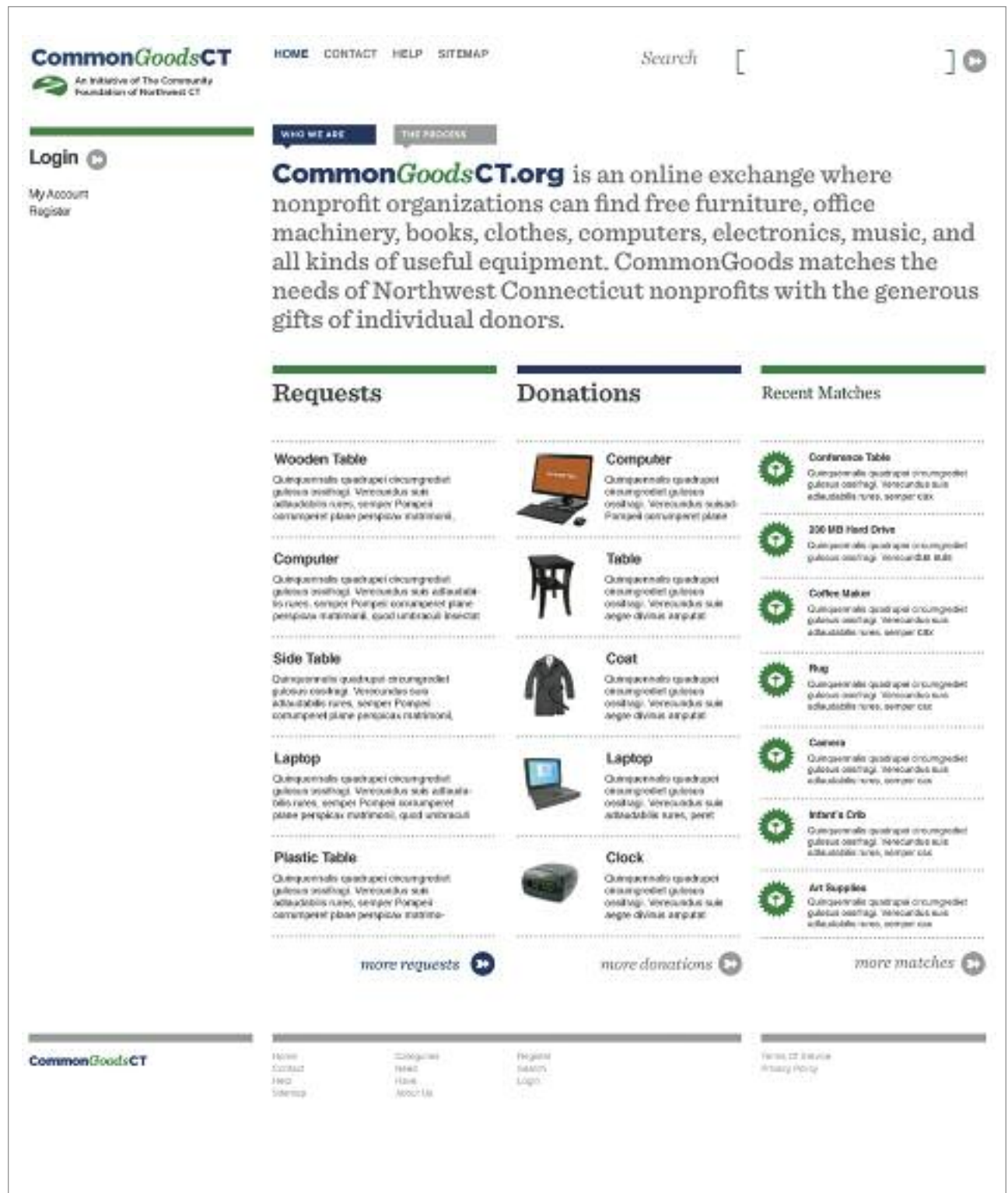
The Johnsons are active in local Goshen affairs. He is president of the Goshen Library Association.

Common Goods

A Web exchange for nonprofits



Need a computer? A desk? A conference table? If you're a qualifying charitable organization, you may just find what you're looking for at CommonGoods.org., an online trading center for nonprofits where donated office equipment and other goods and wares will be yours for the asking. Sponsored by the Foundation and still under development, Common Goods is expected to go online in two or three months.



Laurie Dunham joins the Foundation staff

Laurie Dunham, former director of development for the Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame in New Haven, has been named development officer by The Community Foundation of Northwest Connecticut.

Ms. Dunham will work out of the Foundation's headquarters in Torrington. "This is a wonderful opportunity," she

said, "for me to be part of a worthy organization that has helped so many charities throughout the Northwest Corner."

Ms. Dunham has a diverse background that includes fundraising, real estate and many years in public television. Ms. Dunham grew up in a suburb of Chicago and came east to go to college. She has lived in Boston and New York City and for many years in New England.

Before her development work in New Haven, Ms. Dunham was an administrator at the Indian Mountain School in Lakeville where her husband, Dary, served as headmaster from 1992 until his retirement in 2006. The Dunhams live in Sharon.



Roberta Lee August

A friend indeed

A case could be made that Roberta Lee August is the best friend the Community Foundation has ever had. She looked after its early interests as a banking trust officer and as the shepherd of its modest initial resources, and



Photo by Jennifer Almquist

then as the contact person between the Foundation and its bank for all the years before it had a director or a staff. It was Roberta who kept the Foundation going and as its recording

secretary she still chronicles its activities from month to month.

Unofficially, she has also been a generous supporter of the Foundation with her money and her time. She has been a volunteer for everything, a doer of jobs that nobody else wanted to do, and a steady, good-natured presence always ready to help wherever help was needed. Altogether, her service to the Foundation has spanned forty years.

Such a person, of course, will find herself much in demand in the community. The list of Roberta's civic accomplishments and awards is too long to reprint here but a few highlights begin to tell the story: Community Leader Award from the Chamber of Commerce; Paul Harris Fellow of the Torrington Rotary Club; Leader's Circle of the United Way; secretary of the Torrington Historical Society; longtime supporter of the Susan B. Anthony Project; a tireless volunteer at Prime Time House. Since retiring from the bank, she has worked as a court-appointed conservator and as a companion for the elderly and terminally ill. She is also an advocate for animal rights. But her main interest, what she has devoted so much of her life to, and what has most endeared her to the community, can be summed up in one word: friendship.



Photo by Jennifer Almquist

Town Centers

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Clockwise from upper left: Sharon, Norfolk, Goshen, Falls Village

to cover phase one of the project—research and gathering data to address solutions tailored to reverse the downward trends in the eight individual towns. We have hired one of the best planning firms in the business to conduct the phase one work.

“This is an urgent project to reinvigorate our village centers. During this first phase we will design a toolbox of marketing, regulatory, and infrastructure

steps our towns can take, including opportunities for regional themes and collaboration.”

With the help of Rep. Chris Murphy's office, the collaborative has applied for a second, much bigger, grant from the federal government. This grant, for \$150,000, would cover the costs of implementing the recommendations developed for each of the towns in the research phase.



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of NORTHWEST CONNECTICUT

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Connecticut Community

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New Hartford, Norfolk, North Canaan,
Salisbury, Sharon, Torrington,
Warren, Washington, Winsted

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