

# Community Matters

## Doing Good in Your Community



Community action is especially rewarding when the hard work produces tangible results. It is clear that recipients of The Guilford Foundation (TGF) grants have produced so much joy, brightened spirits, and made the community in which we live measurably better. Here are some vignettes of the profound positive impacts of community efforts in Guilford.

### Guilford Art Center (GAC)

The GAC received TGF funding for operating support to further its community educational programming. GAC provides arts education for community members of all ages and abilities. The arts are uplifting. They provide a sense of accomplishment, as a means of creating beauty and of connecting with others. Class enrollment has been robust – as evidenced by the 4,000 Guilford residents who have taken advantage of this wonderful resource. The TGF grant has enabled GAC to serve a greater number of community members.



“We have heard from many students that their classes at GAC have helped to keep them grounded, happy, productive, and socially connected in ways that enrich their lives,” explains Maureen Belden, GAC Executive Director. “Since the pandemic, we have more classes than ever that have full enrollment with waiting lists. We appreciate support from The Guilford Foundation that enables us to serve as a community resource.”

### Guilford Garden Club (GGC)

Guilford boasts a stunning town green. Thanks to the GGC and TGF, it will remain beautiful. As a TGF grant recipient, the Garden Club has planted trees to keep the green vibrant and a center for community life. The Guilford Tree Fund, under the auspices of GGC, finances the replacement of trees on the Guilford Green and surrounding streets. The Guilford Tree Fund is currently the only organization overseeing the financing for



the “Greening of Guilford.” This effort relies on donations from private citizens, town businesses and community organizations. A grant from TGF supplements these funds and helped to pay for an additional 10-12 trees planted in the spring of 2023.



### Friends of the Guilford Free Library

The Friends’ Fall Book Sale combines the joyful tradition of finding wonderful used books with supporting the library’s operating budget. For 2022, a grant award from TGF defrayed certain costs of supporting the sale, such as tent and table rental and labor costs. The sale impacted 20,000 individuals and made \$45,000 for the Guilford Free Library. The funds raised support the Library’s events, extra books, printers and staff training, etc. Moreover, the community was able to purchase books that are extremely reasonably priced.

“The Book Sale was an overwhelming success,” said Christine Bekasi - Friends Vice President. “Everyone indicated how wonderful the event was for the library and the town. People were impressed with the support from the town and local businesses plus the open space on the Green. ‘What a great place to live!’ was echoed among visitors from outside the area.”

### Legacy Theatre / Wheel of Life Theatre Troupe

The Wheel Life Theatre Troupe increases access to the arts for artists of all abilities and provides an outlet for those who ambulate using crutches or wheelchairs, and their family members. The troupe, which has members of all ages and range of mobility, rehearse together and then perform in front of an audience. Funding from TGF helped the Legacy Theatre offset the costs of the instructors, professional collaborators and travel needs for the Troupe to and from rehearsals and classes.

The impact of these efforts is overwhelming. “During an Acting Class for the Troupe, we were reading a scene from *Peter Pan*, and an actor said that they wished they could fly,” noted Keely Baisden Kundsden, Artistic Director and Co-Founder of Life Theatre. “We had recently had a workshop with the world famous Pilobolus dancers,



and it occurred to me that a collaboration could make it possible for the very able-bodied dancers to “fly” our mobility-challenged actors in an adaptation of *Peter And Wendy*. With the help of the TGF grant, Legacy Theatre was able to contract Pilobolus and make the collaboration and production happen! Thank you, thank you for making the acting troupe’s dreams literally come true!”

