

In a national poll conducted last year by the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, 90% of the respondents expressed deep concern about poverty in the United States. A surprising half of those surveyed said they are concerned that they themselves will become poor at some point in their lives.

Some are probably right. While the number of households on public assistance dropped by nearly half in the 1990s Census results released in May show that the poverty rate hardly dropped at all. In fact, the September report shows it rose last year, as income declined.

In strong neighborhoods, people and institutions make family success a priority. Policies, programs, and activities promote community and economic development, educational opportunity, and family strength.

In neighborhoods that have deteriorated, however, economic opportunities and affordable housing are limited, children are unlikely to receive a quality education, and families lack strong social networks and other critical supports.

Over the years, TPI has worked with corporate and family foundations, individual donors, and others to address these compound issues through affordable housing initiatives and community-building; economic development programs that create employment opportunities, support career advancement for low-wage workers, and promote home ownership; neighborhood transformation and community revitalization efforts; and efforts that increase literacy and improve education—and future prospects—for all children and families.

Some of these strategies are addressing systemic problems in addition to offering relief, mixing assistance with prevention, and ingenuity with faith. These efforts strive to address the root causes and policies that hold families back. In the words of one TPI friend and client, private philanthropy may never be enough to overcome poverty in our society, but “we can find good, efficient programs, test them to determine whether they are replicable, and bring them to the attention of those who control much greater resources.”

The Philanthropic Initiative, Inc.

# INITIATIVES

A NEWSLETTER ON STRATEGIC PHILANTHROPY

## Building Neighborhood: A Place to Call Home

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# Building Community: Lessons for donors

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*According to the Aspen Institute's Community Building Resource Exchange, as many as 100 comprehensive community-building initiatives have been launched over the past 15 years. These seek to create holistic, community-based approaches to neighborhood revitalization that also support children and families. Many involve alliances between community development and human services organizations.*

“The impetus for change can come from many sources. But the keys to success lie in the hands of neighborhood residents, who have to want change, envision change and work for change.” —*The Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation*

**D**riving these efforts is the notion that communities cannot be revitalized through housing alone, or through problem-focused approaches to human services.

Comprehensive community-building efforts address a wide range of issues—social, educational, economic, physical, and cultural. They seek to transform neighborhoods by strengthening the capabilities of residents and the capacity of organizations and institutions. They encourage broad participation and ongoing planning to identify neighborhood needs and implement improvements.

Working with donors, TPI has found that several factors are critical to the success of community building initiatives:

- Active and sustained participation of community residents is the consistent hallmark of successful efforts.
- Organizational leadership that builds on the strengths and assets of the neighborhood is essential to manage the change.
- Individuals involved are able to move beyond traditional roles and to respect and trust one another.
- Funders focus on neighborhood-wide efforts, rather than program or problem-specific efforts.
- Funding is flexible and long-term.
- Evaluation of community-building efforts focuses on measurable indicators, but takes into account less tangible indication of change.

Many of these factors were identified through an independent evaluation of the three-year, ten-site Neighborhood Preservation Initiative launched by the Pew Charitable Trusts. The Annie E. Casey Foundation has also learned a great deal over the years through its many efforts to promote coordinated strategies to transform inner-city neighborhoods and support families within those neighborhoods.

As the experiences of Pew, Casey, and other foundations show us, donors can play many key roles in launching and supporting

community-building efforts. In addition to financial support, donors can participate directly in planning and implementation. Some specific contributions that can add great value include:

- **Needs assessment**—Gather data to describe and document the conditions, needs, assets, and strengths of families and neighborhoods.
- **Technical assistance**—Help neighborhoods acquire necessary skills to enhance their long-term organizational capacity and effectiveness.
- **Facilitation**—Convene, organize, and mobilize people to explore and give voice to individual views and shared visions for community change.
- **Advocacy**—Work to align various levels of government and the private sector with the interests and activities with the community.
- **Evaluation**—Strengthen local capacity to gather and use data effectively to measure the effectiveness of the strategies and to advocate for change.
- **Incubation**—Make flexible funding available to seed innovative approaches and to leverage additional resources.

Building partnerships is essential. Initiatives like the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s Rebuilding Communities Initiative demonstrate the power of collaborations between community-based organizations and funders. However, the challenges in launching and sustaining such initiatives are numerous. Successful partnerships are not forged without a large measure of testing, honest leveling, negotiation and mutual respect between the grantees and the funder.

Casey and other donors who have experience in community building say that funders should make sure that efforts are driven by local needs and approaches. That said, a foundation needs to be clear about its own objectives and direction. Efforts have the best chance for success when funders state their goals and expectations explicitly without being overly prescriptive.



LAVERNE STRACHAN AND HER FAMILY (OPPOSITE PAGE) LIVE IN A HISTORIC THREE-STORY BUILDING LOCATED IN A FORMERLY EMBATTLED, DRUG RAVAGED HARTFORD NEIGHBORHOOD THAT HAS BEEN RENEWED AND REVITALIZED. IN REBUILDING THE COMMUNITY, CONSTRUCTING DECENT AFFORDABLE HOUSING IS A PRIME OBJECTIVE.

In addition, funders need to commit early on to help community-based groups meet the inevitable organizational challenges that comprehensive change efforts present. Funders can play an important role in building capacity and supporting community-building initiatives with high quality staffing and technical assistance to prepare and sustain the effort.

Successful, comprehensive community-building initiatives draw people together through an inclusive process, and work to restore a positive sense of community and individual self-worth. As with all community organizing efforts, the process involves long-term relationship building. “Core Issues in Comprehensive Community-Building Initiatives,” a report by the Chapin Hall Center for Children, describes this process as one that identifies, includes, and builds upon a range of key resources that are found both inside and outside the community.

Communities change slowly, and change is not always in a single direction, nor does it come from a single source.

# Leveraging Resources:

## FleetBoston Community Renaissance Initiative

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MICHELE COURTON BROWN IS PRESIDENT OF FLEETBOSTON FINANCIAL FOUNDATION.

*TPI has worked with FleetBoston Financial over several years to help shape the FleetBoston Community Renaissance Initiative, a multi-year \$4.5 million dollar effort that is working to support new business development, create new employment initiatives and promote home ownership in low income inner-city neighborhoods where Fleet has branches. We asked Michele Courton Brown, President of the FleetBoston Financial Foundation, to describe the strategic planning that went into developing this initiative.*

### ***Why did you choose to focus on community development?***

Fleet has a great deal of expertise in community development and a great deal

to bring to the table. We were looking for a way to leverage our expertise in the community. Beyond general grant support, we wanted to be more proactive in our investment to find new ways to bring about a real revitalization. So, the idea was to develop a process that would engage both the community and the whole corporation. This was not to be a foundation initiative, created “in a silo,” but rather an opportunity to bring our Fleet colleagues—experts in economic development, small business development, and nonprofit lending—around the table to work with us in shaping a meaningful and effective effort.

### ***It makes sense to take advantage of that kind of expertise.***

Yes, but the level of engagement was a bit novel, with Fleet’s business line executives involved at the beginning of the planning process as opposed to later or in the approval stage. And the wonderful thing about that level of engagement is that our business partners became very invested in the success of the initiative.

### ***How did you develop the strategy?***

We did it in two ways. First, with the help of TPI, we developed a sort of “blueprint” and then we took that blueprint to our Fleet corporate partner. Then we formed a working committee that represented my colleagues in the community investment group, small business banking, not-for-profit lending group, and our Community Reinvestment Act executives. [This Act sets the government rating that banks receive based on the level of business they do in low-income communities.] We

asked for their active engagement in the concept, and in identifying cities where we had staff who could be supportive in executing a philanthropic initiative, inventorying the internal resources we could marshal, and then identifying where we had opportunities.

We were looking for areas where Fleet could provide technical and financial assistance, invest in inner-city businesses through our venture capital arm, and promote homeownership through homebuyer education programs and financing to help stabilize neighborhoods and spur economic growth. So, the program essentially met both business and philanthropic objectives.

And, we relied heavily on TPI to facilitate the dialog and to provide the opportunity for us to get external information about what was happening in the area of economic development in the sites we were considering. TPI did that on a blind basis that didn’t tip our hand and provided the information without bias.

The other part of the equation was to leverage off of local Fleet offices and branches. At this level, we were able to engage our local staffs to learn about local economic development needs and see where Fleet’s resources could be best used. So, for example, in Brooklyn, NY we were able to do a reality check based on the information TPI provided and determine, on the ground where we had expertise, where the needs were and then find the intersection.

### ***How does it work?***

Using the information from our local sites and TPI, we selected four initial sites: Brooklyn and Buffalo, NY; New Haven, CT, and Lawrence, MA. Then we issued an RFP. Here, one size did not fit all. Through our research we had identified the leading economic drivers in each city. In some cities there were one or two natural partners—community-based organizations that were clear leaders with ideas for comprehensive economic development plans and that had the capacity to build a collaborative and execute against objectives. In other cases, like Brooklyn, we found a broad swath of opportunities because of sheer size.

In the RFP process we encouraged applicants to seek support and collaborate with nonprofit, governmental and private sector partners. We wanted some evidence

***“...the idea was to develop a process that would engage both the community and the whole corporation.”***

that a collaboration existed or could be formed because that would lay the foundation for being able to leverage our contribution going forward.

We saw this process bear fruit in Brooklyn when we announced our \$750,000 grant to support Fulton FIRST.\* Then-Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's office was quite aware of what we were trying to achieve and invested an additional \$3million for street and sidewalk improvements on Fulton Street. In New Haven, on the very day that we made the grant announcement, the New Haven Foundation joined us with a matching gift of \$500,000. And,

in Buffalo, where our focus was around affordable housing, LISC joined us at \$750,000. Now, from a leveraging perspective, this is success we were able to point to in the first 90 days, and we gained it mostly within the first month.

### ***You accomplished a lot in a relatively short period.***

And we found we could build momentum, which was an interesting learning for us. We began our planning shortly after the announcement of the merger between Fleet and BankBoston, in October 1999, and spent six or seven months in planning and developing. By June of 2000, we had issued the RFP. By September we were reviewing grants, and by October we had identified the partners we were going to invest in. In that time we whittled down the 10 sites we were considering to four. We developed the corporate working

group and engaged local working groups. We launched the RFP in four cities, developed a grant review process, and made a decision in October.

At almost every site we had a press event, attended by over 250 people, including mayors, city council members, chamber of commerce and other business people, foundation staff and others.

### ***How are you evaluating the impact of this initiative?***

We have been convening all of the Fleet local working groups and grantee partners a couple of times each year to

hear from them about their successes and challenges. We are measuring success in a number of ways: the number of housing units that have been built; the amount of additional resources—whether it's loans or grants—that Fleet has leveraged as a result of the project; the business development opportunities that arise out of this; and the Fleet services that are being more broadly distributed. For example, in Brooklyn we connected Fleet's credit card services department with the small businesses and merchants who are part of the Fulton First project. TPI will help us document all of this at the two and one-half year mark, which is fast approaching in this three-year-long effort.

\*Fulton FIRST is the Brooklyn, NY organization Fleet chose to support in leading an effort to help local merchants and entrepreneurs in the Fort Greene community to secure affordable space, financing and other services. The Lawrence, MA grant to Lawrence Community Works is aimed at creating a flexible community development infrastructure that can seed revitalization efforts in one of the poorest Massachusetts cities for years to come. New Haven, CT efforts to jump-start revitalization center on commercial strips in the city's Empowerment Zone. In Buffalo, NY, LISC and Bethel Community Development Corporation are working to develop affordable housing and small business development in the Bethel neighborhood.

# Collaborating for Impact

Melville fights homelessness  
with direct support, education, advocacy

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*The Melville Charitable Trust has set its sights on finding and fighting the causes of homelessness. It supports service and housing programs in Connecticut that serve as models throughout the country, and it is a national leader in funding research, advocacy, and education initiatives to end homelessness in America. These efforts—diverse as they are—have a common element, collaboration.*

**E**arly on, The Melville Charitable Trust saw that the housing and services groups in Connecticut lacked the infrastructure they needed to work more closely together and plan strategically. So Chairman Frank Melville and the Trust board set out to encourage collaboration by funding coalitions that brought together groups working in housing, homelessness, investment, and legal services. These initiatives have had a significant influence in developing leadership and shaping action and policy on state and national levels.

The Trust also has supported the organization and development of a key advocacy, education and outreach program called the Partnership for Strong Communities. This Connecticut-based coalition helped to launch a \$30 million increase in that state's investment for service-enriched housing and expanded community services for the homeless and mentally ill.

Over the past ten years, the Trust has invested more than \$40 million in direct service and housing programs that are enabling formerly homeless people to achieve self-sufficiency.

With Trust support over 2,000 units of affordable housing have been built or rehabilitated, providing rental or home ownership opportunities for people with mental and physical disabilities, former substance abusers, single women with children, and those suffering from AIDS. This includes transitional housing, accessible housing, limited equity and cooperative housing throughout Connecticut. In addition, the Trust supports dozens of inventive shelter, service, counseling, job-training and education programs that are helping people to become and to remain independent.

The Trust also has been successful in leveraging its giving via public sources of funding as well as other private sources. This has meant working collaboratively with departments of state

government in Connecticut on programs and policies which directly affect homeless and affordable housing issues. In doing so, the Trust has established important partnerships with leaders and agencies in the public sector to fund and expand supportive and affordable housing.

The Trust's impact can also be measured by the sheer number and diversity of voices, including those being served, who have partnered in these initiatives. Community land trusts, interfaith coalitions, mutual housing associations, limited equity cooperatives, community development and tenant organizations and other groups rooted in their communities, have joined the with Trust in leveraging a broad range of public and private resources.

The Melville Charitable Trust has put a priority on funding demonstrations, pilots, emergent models, and best practices that show how homelessness can be solved. The Trust's underlying goal is that its work will point to the most promising approaches where state and federal funding and investments can make truly large-scale impacts that will bring a permanent end to homelessness. This is seen most dramatically in the Trust's support of the programs and projects of the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH), both in Connecticut and on the national level. Based on more than a decade of testing and refining models, CSH is now in a position to launch a national initiative to build 100,000 units of supportive housing that will, in effect, bring an end to long term homelessness in America. See [www.csh.org](http://www.csh.org).

From its inception, TPI has played the key role in helping the Trust develop, first through basic programming and research and then by helping to shape its strategic planning and actively implementing its goals.



MEMBERS OF THE FLAG ROAD CO-OP IN WEST HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT CONTRIBUTE TO ITS MAINTENANCE. THE ATTRACTIVE TOWNHOUSES SHOW THAT AFFORDABLE HOUSING CAN BLEND WELL INTO NEIGHBORHOODS.

## Home Work: Picture housing the poor

“If there is a common denominator in my travels around the world, it is the family home. Whatever differences we may have in culture, religion, ideology, or economic status, we are one in our need for a place to call ‘home.’ It is both central to our physical and emotional health and a great root for stable societies.”

In the foreword to *Home Work: The Quiet Success Story of Affordable Housing in Connecticut*, news commentator Tom Brokaw reflects on the notion of home. The book, produced by the Melville Charitable Trust and the Connecticut Housing Coalition, is a compelling photographic record that was sent to every office holder in the state to illustrate how affordable housing improves—rather than blights—communities.

The Trust supports the research and advocacy efforts of Connecticut Voices for Children a leading think tank that studies the impact of welfare reform on poor and homeless women and families. On the national level, the Trust has funded the Washington, D.C.-based Urban Institute’s report on homelessness in America (the first national study in fourteen years). The Trust also funds research and polling on housing affordability and access by The National Low Income Housing Coalition ([www.nlihc.com](http://www.nlihc.com)), the Technical Assistance Collaborative and the National Alliance to End Homelessness ([www.naeh.org](http://www.naeh.org)).



THERESE NADEAU HELPED PLAN THE ACCESSIBLE UNITS AT COBBS MILL CROSSING. THIS LIMITED EQUITY COOPERATIVE ENTITLES LOW- TO MODERATE-INCOME FAMILIES AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES TO LIMITED OWNERSHIP OF THEIR HOMES FOR LITTLE OR NO DOWN PAYMENT, THROUGH THE PURCHASE OF SHARES AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS OF TIME AND LABOR.

### NPR NEWS SERIES EXPLORES DILEMMA

Supported by the Melville Trust and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, National Public Radio launched a special project focusing on the issues of housing and homelessness called “Housing First.” In extensive coverage on-air and online, Housing First began by exploring why it is so hard for Americans with special needs to find good housing—and how the lack of housing often stymies their efforts to join, and flourish in, the mainstream of society.

Throughout this year, NPR radio journalists will explore many of the complex and critical issues of housing and community.

NPR’s online coverage also provides in-depth background reports, photos, videos, and a library of resources on related topics. Listeners can go to [www.npr.org/news/specials/housingfirst](http://www.npr.org/news/specials/housingfirst) to hear the five-part series online.

### WHAT THE TRUST HAS LEARNED

After working with more than a hundred grantee partners for over a dozen years the Melville Trust has found that:

1. Homelessness is a solvable problem.
2. Decent, safe, accessible and affordable housing is indispensable to solving the problem of homelessness.
3. Providing housing with support services to those who have enduring disabilities is the smart, humane, cost-effective solution to long-term homelessness.
4. Our society has more than adequate economic capacity to invest in the housing and provide the services that can eliminate homelessness anywhere in America.
5. Government agencies and officials, as well as our elected representatives on the local, state, national levels must be in the forefront of efforts to end homelessness, investing significant resources in housing and service programs that lead to individual and family independence.
6. All that is needed to eliminate homelessness in America is the political will to do so.

Learn more at [www.melvilletrust.org](http://www.melvilletrust.org)

# Connecting the dots...to a place of one's own

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*Joe Breiteneicher has helped steer TPI as President for a year now, but he has fought to end homelessness for more than a decade. In the TPI tradition of families tackling issues together, the following editorial viewpoint is co-authored with his daughter Alexis who is a project manager with the AIDS Housing Corporation (MA). It gives readers an opportunity to meet Joe—where he lives.*

This morning, at TPI, we read an advance release of a public opinion poll on affordable housing, commissioned by the National Low Income Housing Coalition. A majority of Americans say there is a shortage of affordable housing for low income people in their communities and that they want Congress to take action to solve the crisis. The poll also says that Americans believe spending for housing for those in need rather than more tax cuts is better for the country and the economy—wise counsel from the people that Will Rogers might have predicted.

Looking at the poll and at the exemplary efforts to build community reported in this *Initiatives* makes us think about why this work is so critical and how the nation got to a point that requires such extraordinary action. We listen to a growing national dialogue regarding the need to invest seriously in the housing infrastructure of our country. We see America's homeless—and can't help but focus on the cause-and-effect relationships triggered by domestic policies that have struck at the heart of stability and opportunity for America's poorest. As our colleagues at the National Alliance to End Homelessness remind us, building strong communities begins with ensuring there are safe, decent, affordable places to live. We believe that having and maintaining a real place of one's own is central to all other aspects of people's lives.

The dots we connect.

We see a linear connection between two decades of federal government disinvestment in housing and the national pandemic of homelessness.

- A process of deep cuts in HUD's budget, begun in earnest in the early 1980s, has reduced the federal outlay in 2001 for the production and maintenance of affordable housing to only 33% of what it was in 1976.
- According to a May 2001 study by the National Low Income Housing Coalition, federal spending for public housing development effectively ceased in the 1980s.
- As the Urban Institute reported last year in the first comprehensive nation-wide study in fifteen years, as many as 3.5 million Americans may be homeless in a year—staggering numbers not in evidence before 1980.

More dots.

The Urban Institute reported that children now make up more than 25% of all the homeless. In Massachusetts, according to the McCormack Institute at UMass Boston, 20,000 children have

experienced homelessness each year since the mid 1990s. We are now beginning to see evidence that points to a straight line between homelessness and ruinous impacts on children's lives—children may be society's mine canaries.

- The Urban Institute study, citing a growing body of research, states that homeless children are much more likely than housed children to experience cognitive and emotional problems—e.g. even if income is kept constant, school performance suffers greatly.
- Research data from the University of Pennsylvania indicates that homelessness is the direct cause of a rate of infant mortality and of low birth-weight babies (a key indicator in failure-to-thrive children) that is higher than the national average for low-income women.

We can also follow a path that runs from poverty and the lack of living wages or income supports to an inability to compete in the heated-up housing market for a place to call home.

- In Stamford, Connecticut, according to the CT Partnership for Strong Communities, the typical two-bedroom rental costs \$1,384. To keep the cost of housing to 30% of income, a person would have to earn about \$26 per hour—significantly above the average low-wage worker's pay.

False dots.

There are a number of red-herring dots we've encountered that some folks seem intent on connecting—focusing on various “ize” words:

- Some pathologize the poor, arguing that people's instabilities—of whatever origins and dimensions—lead ineluctably to homelessness.
- Some demonize public housing, making the case that its removal leads to more stable communities.
- Some seek to incentivize the search for housing by holding it out as a reward for good behavior.
- Others, often well-intentioned, marginalize the role housing plays in people's lives by suggesting that the predominant intervention the poor need is more services.
- Many “shelterize” the homeless, turning emergency beds into semi-permanent places to live.

What we believe.

- Three million Americans homeless in a calendar year is a national disgrace for the wealthiest country ever.

**CONTINUED ON BACK COVER**



# One Family Campaign: Getting families back on track

Paul and Phyllis Fireman Charitable Foundation

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*In the beginning, the idea was to get homeless families back on track by giving them a bit of the good luck they deserve, according to Phyllis Fireman. Three years later, that single idea has drawn her family into the complex regions of welfare reform, affordable housing and job training.*

**W**hen Paul Fireman, Chairman and CEO of Reebok Corporation, and his wife Phyllis set out to involve their three grown children in the family foundation, they looked for an issue the whole family could share. The result is the One Family Campaign, an effort to address family homelessness by promoting family self-sufficiency “one family at a time.” Their foundation supplies direct aid to destitute families—mostly women with children—to help them create a life plan to achieve economic and personal stability and also provides scholarships, mentors and other support. Through public engagement, the One Family Campaign also urges faith-based organizations and other associations to take responsibility for helping at least one homeless family achieve self-sufficiency.

But, while “One Family” is the operating principle, there’s not one answer to homelessness says Melinda Marble, Executive Director of the foundation and TPI board member. The foundation has become deeply invested in a social action agenda aimed at providing a network of permanent solutions and prevention services for families through collaboration with more than a dozen agencies and organizations in Massachusetts.

Some of these initiatives cut to the very heart of homelessness and economic security. Others seek simply to add some sanity to the bureaucratic process. One effort, for example, proposes that a single application for state public housing be created to replace the 243 now required to reach all the housing authorities in the Commonwealth.

The campaign is also working to change the measure of poverty. For instance, the federal poverty standard for a family of four, currently set at \$18,100, is based solely on the cost of food and does not factor in rent, childcare or healthcare. The Foundation supports the Massachusetts Family Economic Self-Sufficiency Project, which tracks the real costs of raising a family. Figures from that project suggest that a mother with two children needs close to \$40,000 to live without subsidy in Boston—more than twice the average wage for someone coming off welfare.

Another misconception that thwarts policy progress is the notion that homeless families are street people and substance abusers, says Marble.

“Statistics show that homeless families are no different in terms of criminal behavior, mental illness or substance abuse than other families across the board. The truth is a quarter of families now in shelters are earning a wage. Unfortunately, two thirds of the families who apply for shelter are turned down because they

earn ‘too much’. So they get by, doubling up with relatives, or living in cars. Most are functional parents who have their children living with them, against great odds. What is often missing is the extended family support that helps in a pinch, or they may be coming out of foster care or a domestic abuse situation.”

Facing a different uphill battle, Paul Fireman wants to stop dealing with crisis. He wants to end family homelessness in Massachusetts in five years. His son, Dan, says he finds himself “lying in bed thinking about ways we can get business leaders and politicians to agree with our mission.” Changing public policy is the latest thrust.

From what Marble calls the “kitchen table work” of pulling up a chair and working out what one family needs, to filling the gaps for Fireman Scholars, providing education and training and a path to a job, and setting more realistic standards for self-sufficiency, the Firemans are focused on finding permanent solutions that will put an end to homelessness for families.

For more information see the Web site, [OneFamilyCampaign.org](http://OneFamilyCampaign.org).

# Beyond a job...

## Growing in the workplace

### Fleet Charitable Trusts Career Ladders Initiative

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*Getting a job is a huge step for some people, but sustaining self-sufficiency by staying employed and increasing income is the crucial factor in alleviating poverty in families over the long-term. Fleet Charitable Trusts is attempting to improve the odds for local low-income, entry-level workers to develop new skills, advance their careers and increase their incomes with its Career Ladders Initiative.*

**F**our years ago, members of the Fleet (formerly BankBoston) Charitable Trust Services team decided to look into how low-income families can attain economic self-sufficiency, a primary goal of the Trusts they administer. With TPI's help, the team surveyed a variety of nonprofit job training and adult education providers in Boston and conducted focus groups to learn how those affected by welfare reform were faring. What it encountered was a large number of unemployed and disadvantaged men and women—some coming off welfare, others not—struggling to make ends meet.

Effective workforce development programs that train and place individuals in entry-level jobs exist both locally and nationally. However, TPI's analysis showed that very little support was available to help people, once they obtained jobs, to maintain them or to advance their careers—important steps in becoming truly self-sufficient over time. The research also found a lack of collaboration between employers and community workforce development resources.

Strengthening the entire workforce development system by encouraging new collaborative models to support skill development and career advancement, with a focus on long-term success, appeared to be a credible strategy. With TPI's assistance, Charitable Trust Services developed a three-pronged initiative:

- A \$150,000, three-year grant to building capacity within the Boston Workforce Development Coalition. This Coalition of over 60 organizations promotes public policy change and works to increase resources and improve delivery of workforce development services to low-income individuals. The grant funded additional support for the Coalition's research on developing career ladders for the health care, telecommunications and financial sectors and also provided resources to hire a new executive director.
- To launch the initiative, Fleet Charitable Trusts and the Coalition sponsored a conference to educate employers, unions, job training specialists and educational leaders on the benefits of career ladders for workforce development.
- Grants of approximately \$240,000 awarded over a three-year period to each of four organizations that are collaborating with employers and other workforce development providers to create or expand innovative models designed to help employees advance in the workplace. Several major medical centers and a large financial institution are among the employer partners that are seeking to build clearly defined career pathways into their organizations. Some of their approaches include career counseling, cross-institutional training, training classes for job upgrades, creation of intermediate positions, and career coaching training for supervisors.



**GLEN POLK WAS PROMOTED AT NEW ENGLAND BAPTIST HOSPITAL FOLLOWING FOUNDATION SKILLS TRAINING THROUGH THE BRIDGES TO THE FUTURE PROGRAM.**

As part of the initiative, grantees meet periodically to share ideas and hash over the experience gained from their projects. Fleet Charitable Trust Services uses these opportunities to keep abreast of challenges and successes and has provided valuable technical expertise to assist grantees and to support the Career Ladders models.

Wage progression, job retention and skill-building are the indicators Fleet Charitable Trust Services is using to measure the ultimate success of the projects.

Several factors have an influence on the outcomes according to the interim report recently prepared by an outside evaluator. Among these, accurate assessment of the employee's skill level prior to training, and the support of the employee's direct supervisor are key. The evaluation suggests that while certain outcomes related to wage and career advancement may not be achieved within the three-year grant "increased participation in education and training programs has been an important **CONTINUED ON BACK COVER**

# Building a Future:

Weaving Strategies Together—Annie E. Casey Foundation

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*Arson and neglect devastated the Dudley Street neighborhood in Boston's Roxbury/North Dorchester area in the 1960s and 1970s. But since 1984, the neighborhood of burned out buildings has come alive with more than 600 new homes and scores of businesses. Gardens, parks and playgrounds have transformed its vacant lots. Dudley Street's revitalization is the result of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Rebuilding Communities Initiative in Boston and the work of more than 2,700 residents, business, nonprofits and religious institutions in the area. Casey invests in people and families as they work to build community as part of an ambitious agenda that weaves together a number of integrated strategies.*

**I**ts Neighborhood Transformations/Family Development strategy is one based on the notion that families must have a secure financial base if children are ever to achieve their potential.

Part of this work involves helping people find good jobs. But it also means finding ways to help low income working families combine their wages with subsidies, tax credits and income supplements so they can support their children. Casey believes that bright futures can be built through coordinated strategies for workforce development, economic support and community investment.

*Save Up!* and a new series of efforts help people begin to build their savings with volunteer assistance in money management and budgeting, preparing income taxes, using tax credits, and starting IDA savings accounts in which public and private institutions agree to match the money a person saves toward buying a home, starting a business, or paying for education.

Other strategies include a Jobs Initiative, the Families Count Nationals Honors Program that serves to highlight for policymakers organizations that serve the most needy families, welfare reform efforts, and Making Connections—through which Casey is exploring ways to connect immigrant and refugee families to economic opportunity.

“A balancing act” is how the Foundation represents its large agenda for family economic success. “Tapping into regional employment opportunities while building on neighborhood assets; balancing investments that help people succeed—and maybe move on—with those that make neighborhoods worth staying in; and providing immediate economic relief to families while working for policies to help improve tax benefits and combat predatory lending,” Casey is working to strengthen families in the nation's most vulnerable neighborhoods.

For more information visit the Web site, [www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org).

# INITIATIVES

## A NEWSLETTER ON STRATEGIC PHILANTHROPY

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- Plentiful, stable housing is critical to building productive lives, families, and healthy communities.
- Services for those most in need cannot take hold if people are bereft of a place of their own—e.g., as AIDS activists remind us, housing is healthcare.
- Access to affordable and safe housing should be a fundamental right of all Americans.
- Public housing, done right, ought to be the backbone of any community's affordable housing network.

To make housing a national priority as the poll cited suggests, we need the political will to commit resources to generate more robust housing production initiatives across the country. As our TPI and Melville Trust colleague Bob Hohler points out, if more than 3 million people had been made homeless by a natural disaster, we'd witness a housing program of WPA or Marshall Plan dimensions. We have a man-made disaster that has not yet provoked such a compassionate response. As the stories in this *Initiatives* point out, there is ample room in efforts to build (and rebuild) community for inventive and collaborative private philanthropic endeavors, but the scale of the need argues for an undertaking that must have public resources at its core.

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outcome to date that will likely lead to wage and career advancement in the longer-term."

At the state level, the Fleet Charitable Trusts' initiative appears to be having an effect on how Massachusetts will shape its workforce development programs. Three of the grantees recently won grants from the state, through its Building Essential Skills Training (BEST) Initiative. These will allow the grantees to expand their career ladders projects to a greater number of workers and may help to clear the path along which employees can advance, in their careers and in their lives.

The Philanthropic Initiative, Inc. is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to promote the growth of strategic philanthropy through consulting services with clients, research and educational programming.

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