

## Community Toolkit

- Business Support for Youth Programs
- Creating an Education Program and Hiring Youth Outreach Staff
  - Creating Youth Recognition Awards/Scholarships
  - Developing a Youth Training/Leadership Program
  - Involving Young People in the Election Process
    - Mentoring Students and Visiting Schools
    - Setting up Internship Programs
- Working with Youth to Address Specific Community Issues or Needs
  - **Youth Philanthropy**
- Youth on School, Municipal, and Advisory Boards / Councils

The Maine Department of Education's  
Citizenship Education Task Force

and

CAMPAIGN FOR THE CIVIC MISSION OF SCHOOLS



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Encouraging young people to become active in philanthropic projects promotes strong community ties and involvement. Although young people are interested in matters affecting them directly, they are also concerned with other issues, such as the environment and the development of their schools and communities, and they welcome opportunities to make a difference. Developing a grant-making program to aid a cause or affect social changes in a community will help young people develop valuable leadership and teamwork skills. Working with a team on a philanthropic project enables young people to gain communication and presentation skills, to strengthen their writing and reading skills, and to build confidence in their abilities to make important decisions. In addition to strengthening these skills, young people will also gain knowledge about how community organizations work, how they are funded and established, and how to budget and allocate funds for their work. Communities that help to foster the development of youth-based philanthropic activities will learn more about the concerns of their young people and build stronger connections between generations.

#### The Maine Community Foundation

The Maine Community Foundation, a statewide organization established in 1989 and supported by more than 700 different funds and contribution groups, works with youth-based organizations and young people to address a variety of different community-based issues. These issues can range from helping students to break stereotypes in their communities to helping the elderly. The young people work with advisors to write grants to fund projects that address an issue in their community. Youth-based organizations, schools, and other community groups can contact the Maine Community Foundation for a curriculum, contact resources, and an advisor to help organize and write a grant.

Since its creation, the foundation has worked with a number of communities across the state. In Knox County, a group of young people worked with the foundation to educate the community about the stereotypes being perpetuated and tolerated at the high school. The Camden/Rockport region has separate elementary schools and then a community high school that serves all of the high-school-aged students. Some of the communities sending students to the school are considered more working class and some more upper class. This class division was expressed in the school through negative stereotypes created by the individual communities. In an effort to dispel the stereotypes, the grant funded activities that allowed students from the different communities and varying socioeconomic levels to spend time learning more about each other. In another Knox County school district, a group of young people from the Watershed Community School worked with advisors and the foundation to write a grant to fund activities intended to benefit their elderly community members.

## YOUTHINK

YOUTHINK is a board of 20 young people and five adults from Portland, Maine, who are part of a national grant called the Youth Innovation Fund, led by the National Service-Learning Partnership with support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. In July 2003, Portland was picked, along with seven other national sites out of more than 250 communities nationwide, to create a diverse board of youth—from different backgrounds, schools, and experiences—who work with adult allies and community partners to bring long-term positive change to their city. The Portland Partnership administers the grant and works closely with KIDS Consortium to support all aspects of the work of YOUTHINK.

YOUTHINK's goals are to have fun while increasing youth voice, establishing young people as leaders, creating activists, and empowering youth to open the minds of others. Using the KIDS service-learning model as a framework for helping young people to identify, research, and design solutions to problems, YOUTHINK has reached out to hundreds of Portland youth to encourage them to take action on problems affecting their lives and the lives of others in the community. Understanding the positive power of money to bring about change, the YOUTHINK board also awards grants to other youth who have developed concrete plans to tackle problems.

In 2004, they worked hard to figure out which issues were the most important in the community and how young people working with adults could find creative new ways of dealing with these issues. YOUTHINK began by interviewing community experts about the major issues facing Portland. They focused on the issues that most affected young people and also spoke to more than 120 young people in schools throughout Portland about what it was like to be teenagers living in Portland. Through this process of community mapping, YOUTHINK decided on five areas as a focus for awarding grants: school culture, diversity and discrimination, employment and activities, safety and violence, and housing and homelessness.

Youth-to-youth philanthropy is an important tool for YOUTHINK, as they work on their long-term objective of promoting social change in Portland. In 2004-05, YOUTHINK gave out \$12,200 in grants to other young people in Portland. Following are some examples of their grants:

- *The Homelessness Project*—Observing the isolation of Portland's homeless, young women from Riverton Park are working with community partners and homeless individuals to understand the root causes of adult homelessness. This project will climax with a local awareness and advocacy effort.
- *A Day in the Life of Riverton Park: the Movie*—This project aims to break down stereotypes about youth in low-income neighborhoods by creating a documentary about the complexities of teenage life in a housing project—including controversial issues such as adultism (the oppression of young people by adults), classism, racism, and drugs. Film screenings followed by community forums will be scheduled around Portland.
- *Funky Fitness*—Several students at Portland High School got frustrated after seeing their friends skip class or even drop out of school. The reason: feeling

uncomfortable in gym class. In cooperation with the physical education staff, these students will do research through surveys and focus groups and study alternative physical education programs nationally. Their goal is to explore a low-cost alternative to traditional physical education classes.

- *Peer Literacy Project*—Students at Portland High School will form a group for outreach and support to the community of English as a Second Language (ESL) learners in their school. Peer tutors will help to improve the literacy skills of beginner and advanced beginner ESL students through one-on-one interaction, using educational games, and reading activities.

In May 2005, YOUTHINK organized Maine’s first youth philanthropy conference called “New Voices in Social Change.” The event brought together youth-philanthropy groups from across Maine for a day of workshops and presentations about their work.

## Ideas and Suggestions for Implementation

### How do we get young people excited about philanthropy?

Encourage young people to attend school board meetings and city council meetings, so they can express their concerns and find support. According to Peter Taylor of the Maine Community Foundation, “it is incumbent on adults who are working on initiatives to see young people as assets.” In schools, make the effort to ask students what their concerns are and find out what their ideas are to correct any issues.

### What are the objectives of getting young people involved in philanthropic projects?

Encouraging young people to participate in philanthropic projects is a great way to get them involved with their communities. It also can teach them important life lessons. When planning a project, a key step is determining what the overall goals are. The Maine Community Foundation has goals laid out in its curriculum, which can be used as guidelines for other programs.

- Foster civic engagement and civic responsibility among youth committee members through the grant-making process.
- Help youth committee members gain new knowledge and understanding of their communities, including the role and function of non-profit and philanthropic organizations in building and strengthening community life.
- Support youth advisors in their roles as community leaders through training and leadership development (decision-making, communication, team building).
- Change the perceptions of adults involved in the program and in the community about the abilities of youth.

### How will the project be organized?

While it can be difficult for young people to find support for new community projects, it is important to determine how a project will be organized. “If a young person shows the interest in trying to get involved with their community there needs to be a connector,” says Peter Taylor. A connector is a person who can help them to get their project off the ground. When young people show concern or interest in a particular issue, encourage them to do something about it and make sure that the needed resources are made available. Taking this into account, some important questions that need to be considered:

- Will the project be structured like a classroom project and run by an adult community member?
- Should the young people assume the leadership roles and adults serve only as advisors?
- Should there be an established timeframe for the project?

### What topics need to be addressed to make the project most effective?

As with any project taken on by a group of individuals, there are key terms, topics, and group functions that need to be discussed to ensure that all participants understand the

project fundamentals and basis for the work. The group advisor can aide in the discussion of these topics, which can include the following:

- The definition, goal and overall concept of philanthropy;
- Communication, trust, respect and teamwork;
- The role of young people in communities;
- Where to find resources and how to present project goals/objectives to gain support;
- How to publicize the project and involve the community;
  - Notifying the press and writing press releases;
  - Holding community forums to discuss ideas and plans.

## Case Study Resources

Peter Taylor  
**The Maine Community  
Foundation**  
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1-877-700-6800  
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<http://www.mainecf.org>

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wallaa@portlandschools.org  
[http://www.service-learningpartnership.org/site/PageServer?pagename=yifi\\_portlandme](http://www.service-learningpartnership.org/site/PageServer?pagename=yifi_portlandme)

## Additional Resources

### 4-H

The National 4-H Council offers grants for youth in local communities, in counties, and on the state level. These grants provide opportunities for young people and adults to take action on issues critical to their lives, their families, and their communities. Youth take the lead in the design of the project, the proposal writing process, the implementation, and the evaluation of funded projects.

<http://www.fourhcouncil.edu/GrantsProgram.aspx>

### Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream

The Scoopers Making Change Program offers young people, employed in scoop shops throughout the U.S. and Canada, the opportunity to further their understanding of effective strategies for positive social change. The program targets community-minded youth (ages 17 - 21). Participants in this week-long program will explore innovative ways businesses and individuals address community needs and solve social problems. The program provides young people with the knowledge, inspiration and confidence they need to be agents of positive social change in their communities. Scoopers Making Change participants will receive a grant of up to \$1,000 to support their project.

[http://www.benandjerrys.com/scoop\\_shops/ss\\_social\\_mission/scoopers\\_making\\_change/index.cfm](http://www.benandjerrys.com/scoop_shops/ss_social_mission/scoopers_making_change/index.cfm)

### Center for Youth as Resources

Provides small grants to youth and supports them as they design and implement issue-related projects. Young people are affiliated with youth centers, schools, churches, community foundations, and their projects tackle a variety of social problems. Past organizational and youth participants help provide training and technical assistance. <http://www.yar.org>

### CRF Youth Forum

The Constitutional Right Foundation (CRF) Youth Forum provides great resources on how to fund your project. See the following quick, use-friendly articles: "Create a Budget;" "Grant Opportunities;" "Taking Advantage of Community Resources." <http://www.crfforum.org/resources/?topicid=6&catid=10>

### The EdGE (Maine Seacoast Mission)

The Maine Sea Coast Mission is a nonprofit that helps downeast coastal and island communities in Maine. <http://www.seacoastmission.org/edge.htm>

### Hannaford Charitable Foundation

The Hannaford Charitable Foundation provides financial support for programs and organizations with a current 501(c)(3) tax exempt status dedicated to improving the communities in the five-state area where they operate stores. Requests from worthy charities in Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New York, and Vermont that fall into four general categories: Health and welfare; Educational institutions; Civic and cultural organizations; and Other local charitable organizations. Organizations funded by the Foundation include YMCAs and YWCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, museums, libraries, hospital building or capital funds, as well as college and university capital or building funds.

[http://www.hannaford.com/Contents/Our\\_Company/Community/charitableFoundation.shtml](http://www.hannaford.com/Contents/Our_Company/Community/charitableFoundation.shtml)

### Independent Sector

2002 Report, “Engaging Youth in Lifelong Service” finds that adults who engaged in volunteering in their youth give more money and volunteer more time than adults who began their philanthropy later in life.

<http://www.independentsector.org/>

### KIDS Consortium

KIDS lists national grants for service-learning opportunities in your school.

[http://www.kidsconsortium.org/tools\\_grants.html](http://www.kidsconsortium.org/tools_grants.html)

### Libra Future Fund

The Libra Future Fund was created to capitalize upon the energy and creativity that Maine’s young people embody and to combat youth out-migration by supporting initiatives that increase the number of Maine-based professional opportunities. Grants are awarded to individuals to promote economic development or create job opportunities in Maine. <http://www.librafoundation.org/LFF.htm>

### Maine Initiatives

Chrysalis Youth Action Fund at Maine Initiatives is a youth-run grant program providing resources and tools to empower youth in Maine to organize for economic, environmental, and social justice.

<http://www.maineinitiatives.org/chrysalis.aspx>

### Maine Share

MaineShare is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to funding solutions for social change in Maine. They provide funding for 35 statewide organizations whose missions include environmental protection, engaging students in the arts and civic involvement, health care reform, animal rights, defending civil liberties and more. <http://www.maineshare.org/>

### Maine Women’s Fund

The New Girl’s Fund for Social Change works to build a community of young activist women in Maine interested in projects and efforts that improve the lives of young women and girls. The fund projects focused on economic empowerment, access to health care and information, prevention of violence and self-determination. <http://www.mainewomensfund.org/grants/ngfsc.php>

### Project Plan-It!

Project Plan-It! offers a youth-oriented, interactive guide to help plan a service project. Resources include how to develop a funding proposal, create a press release, project plan, and a reflection plan.

<http://www.ysa.org/planit/>

### W.K. Kellogg Youth Innovation Fund

The W.K. Kellogg Youth Innovation Fund is an initiative supporting diverse groups of young people creating lasting change in their communities. The Youth Fund brings together multiple youth engagement strategies creating innovative models to scale service-learning and youth civic action in communities. The models created by the Youth Fund will serve as a prototype for other communities looking to build a system of community wide youth civic engagement. There are currently eight communities participating in the Youth Innovation Fund. [http://nslp.convio.net/site/PageServer?pagename=yif\\_index](http://nslp.convio.net/site/PageServer?pagename=yif_index) &

<http://www.wkkf.org/default.aspx?tabid=55&CID=297&ProjCID=297&ProjID=102&NID=28&LanguageID=0>

### Youth ActionNet

Youth Voice: A Guide for Engaging Young People in Leadership and Decision-Making in Service-Learning Programs provides an overview on the importance of youth voice in service-learning and includes an extensive resource section. Download this report for information about “youth as funders” (p.26).

<http://www.youthactionnet.org/resources/index.cfm?rsid=963> See also their web listings of resources to help youth identify potential donors, write an effective proposal, and plan a fundraising event.  
<http://www.youthactionnet.org/toolkit/fundraise.cfm>

### Youth Activism Project

Check this site out for links to other organizations that fund youth projects. See “Youth Strategies: Finding Funding.” <http://www.youthactivismworld.org/index.php3?mo=53>

### Youth Service America

Youth Service America give grants and awards that support and motivate youth, teachers, service-learning coordinators, and youth-serving organizations to plan and implement projects for National Youth Service Day and on-going service throughout the year. [http://www.ysa.org/awards/award\\_grant.cfm](http://www.ysa.org/awards/award_grant.cfm)