

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT TO ACAP SAINT JOHN

by Jane Barry of The Greater Saint John Community Foundation

The Greater Saint John Community Foundation announced details of its fourth anniversary grant at a ceremony last week. The \$15,000 donation to ACAP Saint John is being characterized as a way of supporting the community's interest in our natural environment and as a tribute to the outstanding work of ACAP Saint John over more than 18 years. It is the largest environmental sector grant the since the Foundation began granting 33 years ago. A grand total of fifty one charitable causes, valued at \$172,866 in grants, are being supported in the Foundation's fiscal year just ended.

The Anniversary Grant was inaugurated in 2006 to mark the Community Foundation's thirtieth anniversary. Each year, the major award of \$30,000, or \$15,000 in two segments, spring and fall, goes to a community charitable group which best address clearly documented priorities in Greater Saint John. The Foundation's annual Report Card on Greater Saint John's quality of life, Vitals Signs, has identified a number of community challenges such as water quality and Harbour Cleanup in their four annual Community Report Cards. Vitals Signs is used as a grant-making guide.

Anniversary grants can positively affect the arts, social services, health, education, the environment, heritage or recreation and have been awarded to First Steps, the Salvation Army, the Saint John YM-YWCA and the Crescent Valley Resource Centre to date. Public spirited donors can continue to contribute to the Community Foundation's Anniversary Fund, which is permanently endowed and continues to provide funding for Anniversary Grants each year.

This year, the funds will be directed to young people whose chosen career is in this field, who are seeking work and employment experience in their home community, while working on challenges facing the waterways of Greater Saint John. The announcement was made in conjunction with a public Open House on ACAP's Marsh Creek Restoration Initiative.

The Foundation is active in the environmental field, since initially being supported by the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation of Montreal. It has organized and presented a number of public events as community services: six Annual Harbour Passage Garden Parties, as well as symposia on Children's Environmental Health, Climate Change, Drinking Water and last month, an Open House and tour of Somerset Square, Saint John's first LEED building, which has just received the prestigious Gold Level of accreditation for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, a first for Atlantic Canada.

Cheryl M.G. Robertson, Foundation Chair, states, "We evaluated many excellent projects put forward, along with many regular applications for funding. We congratulate ACAP Saint John, for taking the lead in many key local environmental issues. We add our support to the Marsh Creek plan, which will be of substantial benefit to the entire community." she added.

The Atlantic Coast Action Program Saint John, founded 18 years ago, is a community based, non-profit organization that encourages local involvement from all sectors: industry, business, educators, environmental organizations and the three levels of government. It has organized numerous "beach sweeps" and been a tireless advocate for "harbour cleanup". Terry Cormier heads the diverse Board of Directors which represents heavy industry, academia, corporations, entrepreneurs, engineering, surveying and waste management firms, as well as concerned citizens. Tim Vickers, a biologist, has been its Executive Director for over 6 years. Environment Canada has been providing project based funding and organizational support, with help from the New Brunswick Environmental Trust Fund and other public and private funders.

From Cape Spencer to Musquash, along the St. John and the Kennebecasis Rivers, and their tributaries, the Nerepis, Musquash and, Little Rivers, Marsh and Hazen Creeks, the group's primary goals are: to work with the community to improve the environmental health and integrity of our waterways and respond to the public's demand to be more involved in environmental decision making. Created as one of thirteen environmental "hotspots" in Atlantic Canada through the Federal Government's Green Plan of 1990, a community based approach to managing our aquatic environment has been its hallmark.

The Greater Saint John Community Foundation serves as a trustee for charitable, educational and cultural purposes. It administers funds, large and small, donated by public-spirited citizens for the benefit of the people of Greater Saint John. Earnings from permanent endowment funds are donated to local charities for many worthy causes - youth, seniors, health & medicine, education, the arts, environment and social services. It is a member of Community Foundations of Canada, over 160 independent Community Foundations working together to help improve the quality of life in communities across Canada. Since 1976, the foundation's assets have grown to approximately \$8 M. In 2008, it donated in excess of \$271,000.00 to over 75 local charities.



Photo:

Cheryl Robertson, Community Foundation Chair presented ACAP Saint John's Chairman Terry Cormier with its \$15,000 Anniversary Grant last week. The funds will give young people whose chosen career path is in the environmental field, work and employment experience, while addressing challenges facing the waterways of Greater Saint John.



Community Profile is a weekly column highlighting community causes and work done by non-profit organizations in the Greater Saint John area. It is contributed by Jane Barry, executive director of The Greater Saint John Community Foundation.

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