

## Message from the President

*Note: John Vasconcellos joined the Community Foundation as President on August 1*

Dear Friends,

I'd like to take a moment to let you know how excited I am to be leading the Community Foundation into its third decade of working to improve the quality of life in Southeastern Massachusetts.

Much of my extensive career in nonprofit organizational management and fundraising has been spent pursuing that goal. I am a New Bedford native and resident with a passion for improving the quality of life in Southeastern Massachusetts. Most recently, I served as Senior Regional Director for The Trustees of Reservations' Boston and Southeast Region, spearheading The Trustees' acquisition of two of its newest properties, the beautiful Allen C. Haskell Public Gardens in New Bedford and Dunes' Edge in Provincetown.

Prior to joining The Trustees in 2011, I served as Managing Director for Development and Marketing for the Gay Men's Health Crisis in New York City, the nation's first-ever AIDS service organization, and before that as President of Development and Communications for The Coalition for Buzzards Bay, which is dedicated to the restoration, protection and sustainable use of the Bay and its watershed. I moved back to the East Coast in 2003, after living in San Francisco where I served as Director of Development for the San Francisco AIDS Foundation.

Meanwhile, the staff of the Community Foundation and its funds has been busy with efforts and initiatives that I believe will have a strong impact on our quality of life in the region. This year, we launched a new online scholarship platform and awarded college scholarships to more than 125 students. Through August 31, we have awarded \$1.1 million in scholarships, grants and program support for educational initiatives, arts and culture, the environment, and more.

Our Flagship Funds have been hard at work as well. AHA! started its 18<sup>th</sup> year this July making it the longest continuously funded project in the Mass Cultural Council's portfolio of creative economy projects. With the successful funding of the Fall River AHA! project by the Mass Cultural Council, AHA! is the only creative economy project to have "franchised" and collaborated on a replication project in a neighboring community – the two primary anchor cities of the CFSEMA.

The Women's Fund has staked out a role as a regional leader in women's economic status that invests over \$150,000 annually to create better economic opportunities for women and girls. The Fund began 2015 with a sharply defined goal: *to increase the percentage of women in the region earning a living wage*. This last year, we convened the Task Force on Pathways for Women to a Living Wage to make recommendations for how to accomplish that, and developed an Economic Blueprint for Women. The Task Force is now dividing into six working groups to select strategic priorities

We have a rich and robust life here in Southeastern Mass., and I look forward to pursuing the great opportunities we have to connect those who do good work with those who want to support them.

Regards, John Vasconcellos, President