



community development partnership

Creating opportunities for people to live, work, and thrive on the Lower Cape

Supporter Profile: Judy Keller on Making an Impact

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Judy Keller, Orleans



Sixteen years ago Judy Keller, a retired math teacher of 35 years, arrived on the Cape with her partner Carolyn, a former Girl Scouts of the USA executive, ready to start another chapter of their lives. They settled in Orleans where they live with Carol's 97-year-old mother.

Judy has been a supporter of the CDP for over 10 years and was first introduced to the organization by former CDP Board member Florence Seldin and current Board member Fran McClennen. When Judy was determining which organizations she wanted to support, it was the CDP's work in economic development and Housing Rehabilitation that really sparked her interest.

Judy is also a member of the local Jewish congregation Am Ha Yam and serves on their Board of Directors. “Organizations that make an impact in the lives of people living in my local community are important to me,” says Judy.

Originally from the Bronx, Judy's father was a grocer in Manhattan. She grew up with an awareness of the challenges and rewards of being a small business owner. “Many of his concerns were related to his small business competing with the larger chain stores like A&P,” reflects Judy. “He emphasized more personal service and was able to build up a loyal clientele.”

Small businesses are the life blood of the Lower Cape and help define its culture as well as its neighborhoods. Judy points out that “We are again seeing an emphasis placed on shopping at local establishments to create a neighborhood feeling and the CDP is instrumental in helping small businesses realize this effort.”

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She believes the work is so important that it guides her philanthropy. “Economic development is the only way that Cape Cod, especially the Lower Cape can survive,” says Judy.

Affordable housing is another issue that Judy feels is a critical piece of the puzzle, and another reason why she supports the work of the CDP. While she does not know anyone who has benefitted from the Housing Rehabilitation program personally, the stories of families whose homes have been repaired as well as her volunteer with Habitat for Humanity have inspired her to support the CDP “I’ve seen the difference that secure housing makes in peoples’ lives,” reports Judy

Perhaps a reflection of her career as a teacher, she also looks for organizations “that support the children and youth in our communities- the ones that help them realize all of their potential.” She is a proponent of “paying it forward.” She remarks that “We are not a community if we do not support the upcoming generations. The work the CDP has done with young budding entrepreneurs like Sam Bennison of Jo Mamas’ Bagels in Chatham and Cameron Henchy of Lea’s Boat Rentals in Brewster, are great examples of how Judy’s support is helping these young individuals realize not only their potential, but their dreams as well.

We are grateful for supporters like Judy who are committed to this community and make it possible for us to help small businesses and families thrive on the Lower Cape.