



community development partnership

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

Supporter Spotlight: Kyle Takakjian

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Kyle Takakjian
CDP Advisory Council Member



CDP supporter and Advisory Council member Kyle Takakjian’s deep appreciation of both the challenges and beauty of the Lower Cape are connected to his life of service to the community.

As a child, Kyle’s parents would bring him and his older brother Eric to Brewster every summer where they rented a small cottage. Some of Kyle’s most vivid memories are those of watching jets fire upon the USS James Longstreet, a World War II Liberty ship, which had been sunk for target practice off First Encounter Beach. Another was fishing on the charter boat Columbia out of Rock Harbor in Orleans.

Perhaps it was watching jets fire on the Liberty ship, or the influence of his uncle who served in World War II, that Kyle decided he would become an Air Force pilot. His need for eyeglasses dashed that dream but today he works at Chatham Airport, flying bi-planes in the summer for people who want a breathtaking tour of the Lower Cape, and working as a mechanic in the winter. His love of military history and flying has also led him to co-piloting antique World War II planes, specifically the B25 Mitchell bomber.

While Kyle now enjoys the view from above, much of his life has been spent on the water. After studying welding in high school, Kyle went to work for a welder in New York City. His brother approached him about starting a maritime welding business together on the Cape. Kyle loved the idea but didn’t know much about boats so he joined the Coast Guard Reserves in 1984. It was the start of a 29-year career culminating in his post as the Reserve Command Master Chief for the 1st Coast Guard District, which is based out of Boston and covers the north east.

After completion of his Coast Guard training, he was assigned to the small boat station at Chatham. Neither he nor his brother had much money so they found an affordable apartment at 101 Shore Road in Truro, the site of an old motor lodge that had been converted to affordable apartments. “It was as

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bad then as it is now,” recalls Kyle. “I know from personal experience what it’s like to live in a terrible housing situation with freezing pipes and poor insulation.” The brothers hung on for two years until both moved to Provincetown.

To get their business up and running they needed capital to purchase a truck and equipment but finding a bank that would fund them wasn’t easy. Through a friend they found a local bank that extended them the loan they needed. “Through that experience I learned what it was like to run a small business,” recalls Kyle, “especially in the dearth of winter.” While difficult initially, Kyle remembers by name those who believed in him and hired him just to give him the chance.

At home in Provincetown Kyle had several friends who worked on the police department and over time they convinced him to join the Provincetown Police department. He did so in 1986 then was hired by the Truro Police Department two years later. Over the next couple of years Kyle married and built a house. “It’s crazy to think of the price of land and houses back then. We purchased the land and by the time we finished building the house we were in it for about \$115,000.” Kyle acknowledges that today that would not have been possible on a police officer’s salary citing why the CDP’s work on affordable housing is so important.

Upon his promotion to Chief of Police in Truro in 2011, Kyle retired from the Coast Guard Reserve the following year after 29 years of service. Having retired from the Police Department in 2017 after serving 31-years, the last 6 as Chief, Kyle truly understands the housing and economic challenges that face the region.

He notes the lack of affordable homes and rentals on the Lower and Outer Cape and how it is impacting local police and fire departments. “It’s truly beneficial for police officers to live in the communities in which they serve,” says Kyle. “When I became the police officer in Truro, everybody in the department except for two people lived in Truro. When I retired thirty-one years later, everyone but three people lived outside of town with the nearest officer coming from Eastham.” This is particularly problematic when there is an emergency, such as a motor vehicle accident, and officers are needed to transport victims to the hospital, direct traffic, and conduct an investigation. Rural police departments rely on off-duty officers to come in and cover, and if they are traveling from 20 to 30 minutes away it has real consequences for the department. Additionally, as Kyle points out “I always felt that whether I was a patrolman or police chief that I was deeply connected to the people I served in Truro. When you live in the community in which you police, you carry the weight of their struggles with you. I knew who had lost their job and was struggling. Our kids played sport together. It increases your empathy.”

Kyle learned of the CDP when CDP CEO Jay Coburn served on the Select Board in Truro and was liaison to the Truro Police Department. During this time Kyle was also asked to join the Board of the local non-profit Highland Affordable Housing. While he served on the Board for five years, and their President for the last, year he was involved with several housing projects and became increasingly familiar with the work the CDP did on affordable housing. Jay and Kyle hit it off and after a period of time Jay asked Kyle to join the CDP’s Advisory Council.

While Kyle considers the work the CDP does on housing to be both critical and impactful, it is his early experience with starting a business that resonates with him. “The CDP does great work with housing but what is also important is the work the CDP does with small businesses offering both technical assistance as well as micro loans,” notes Kyle. He adds “I remember so vividly how much of a struggle it was for Eric and I to get our business up and running. We had no idea where to go to for



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help. At best we knew how to balance our check-book but we didn't know technically how to run a business. It is so critical to have an organization on the Lower Cape that is focused on these very small businesses, where people can go for the knowledge and technical help that they need."

A 29 year veteran of the Coast Guard and a 31 year veteran from the police force, having retired in 2017, Kyle resides in Harwich and enjoys his 10-minute commute from the airport. "I've been really blessed throughout my life," says Kyle. "I have a deep love for the Coast Guard and I was able to serve our country. And I am deeply honored to have been able to serve the people of Truro as a Police Officer and finishing my career as their Chief of Police. The town had gone through some struggles in the department and I was eternally grateful for the confidence the community had in me."

While our region now finds itself in another major struggle as it copes with the pandemic and the economic impacts, Kyle has confidence in the resilience and strength of this community.

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