

Fundraiser to help overlooked

By **BRIAN M. JOHNSON**
@BRIANJOHNSONBP

The Bristol Press | BristolPress.com

BRISTOL — The Men & Boys' Fund of the Main Street Community Foundation will be holding its first fundraiser, "Raise a Pint" Monday at Main Street Pint & Plate.

The fundraiser will be held from 5 to 8 p.m. at the restaurant at 182 Main St. Included with the price of the ticket will be a sampling of the menu and a glass of beer or wine. Proceeds will help the fund's efforts to assist local men and boys.

Rep. Whit Betts, vice-chair of the Men & Boys' Fund, said that he and fund Chair Rodger Stotz will speak that night about what the fund has accomplished since it was established last year.

"We have raised and given out an impressive amount of money since last year," said Betts. "It is very heartwarming and inspiring and there is a huge need."

Stotz said that the fund was created after speaking to various social services about the needs of men and boys that they would address if they had more support. In one case, he said he heard about a homeless man who got back on his feet and got a job in construction but didn't have the \$120 he needed to buy work-safe shoes.

"In talking to Susan Sadecki, the president and CEO of the Main Street Community Foundation, we are one of the only, if not the only, local (funds) that has been established to help men and boys who are 18 or over," said Stotz. "Most social services and non-profits are mainly focused on women, children and families. We as a society view men as self-sufficient and expect them to just 'suck it up' and 'tough it out.' Men have just as many, if not more,

men, boys is Monday

male facilitator for a single fathers parenting group."

Stotz said that immediate need grants since last year have included \$250 to help send a local high school student who was economically challenged to a STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) conference he would not have otherwise been able to afford to travel to. The funding also helped provide a homeless man who was turning

his life around with the \$75 he needed to pay for an application fee to get into subsidized housing.

Tickets are \$45 and can be purchased by sending a check to Main Street Community Foundation, P.O. Box 2702, Bristol, CT 06010. They can also be purchased at the door.

Brian M. Johnson can be reached at 860-973-1806 or bjohnson@bristolpress.com.

challenges than women due to them often having the inability to admit that they need help."

Stotz said that in Connecticut, as well as nationwide, more men than women are unemployed and suicide rates are higher in men than in women.

"Also, in Connecticut elementary schools, only 17 percent of teachers are males," said Stotz. "Another problem comes into play when young boys, 62 percent of which come from mostly female-headed single parent households, have no male role models. When this happens, these boys often find the wrong types of role models on the street."

The Men & Boys' Fund works to make it possible for men and boys to improve the quality of their lives, increase their self-sufficiency and make a positive difference in their communities. The fund has provided program and immediate need grants to

local men and boys in Bristol, Burlington, Plainville, Plymouth, Southington and Wolcott.

"Since last year, we have awarded two grants totaling \$3,200," said Stotz. "We gave \$2,000 to Bristol Youth Services to help fund a "skills to pay the bills" program, which teaches life skills like nutrition and banking, for male high school students starting up this August. The Women and Girls Fund at the Main Street Foundation has funded a similar program for high school girls. We also awarded \$1,200 for Bristol Hospital's Parent & Child Center to support single fathers. More and more single men are now being granted custody as the courts are accepting that the female partner might not always be the best parent. This funding allowed them to hire a