

FEATURED

Main St. Foundation to award \$30k for 30th anniversary

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Susan Sadecki, president and CEO of the Main Street Community Foundation.

-File photo.



BRISTOL — The Main Street Community Foundation is celebrating 30 years of giving by awarding \$30,000 in new grants to 10 area nonprofits Sept. 13.

Samantha Rajotte, scholarship and program officer with the Main Street Community Foundation, said that the Foundation was established in 1995 and has since awarded \$32.7 million in grants, becoming one of the leading grant-makers in the Central Connecticut region. It supports nonprofits in the communities of Bristol, Burlington, Plainville, Plymouth, Southington and Wolcott.

The 30th anniversary celebration, “Meet Us On Main”, will be held Sept. 13 from 6 to 10 p.m. at The Aqua Turf Club at 556 Mulberry St.

Rajotte said that the event will honor the history of the Foundation, celebrate its accomplishments, and recognize the Main Street Community Foundation’s founders and donors.

The “Meet Us On Main” event will culminate in the announcement of ten “Circa 1995” grants. Attendees will help to allocate the grants, which range from \$1,000 to \$10,000, by casting votes that evening. The money will be awarded from the Bristol Savings Bank Fund to celebrate the Foundation’s 30th anniversary.

“Ten local 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations were selected from an applicant pool and challenged with providing a vision for how their organization will make a difference in the next 30 years,” Rajotte said.

The following are the finalists for the “Circa 1995” grants:

- American Clock & Watch Museum
- Environmental Learning Centers of Connecticut
- Memorial Military Museum
- PARC
- Plymouth Community Food Pantry
- Shepard Meadows Equestrian Center
- Southington Community Cultural Arts
- The Agape House

— The Eagle’s Nest

— Veterans Strong Community Center

Rajotte said the celebration at Aqua Turf Club will have an “elevated hometown celebration atmosphere” with “fabulous” food, roaming entertainment, live and silent auctions as well as a “wonderful opportunity for all to join in a memorable celebration.”

Proceeds from the event will support Main Street Community Foundation’s community leadership efforts, also known as “Money in Motion.” This is an unrestricted fund that is used to address the changing needs of the local community, she said.

“The idea of an event to celebrate the 30th anniversary of Main Street Community Foundation would not have even crossed the minds of the small group of community leaders who began discussing the creation of a community foundation back in the early 1970s,” Rajotte said. “It began with Bob Merriman, Sherwood Anderson, and Ed Lorensen considering the idea that, in addition to giving to specific charities, local residents should have the opportunity to give to a community foundation where all needs of the community would be considered.”

Rajotte said the first formal conversation occurred with these three individuals, as well as Hap Barnes, C. Stewart Anthony, and Terry Fletcher, in 1974. It was then that they decided to start such an organization when there was both enough money and community interest.

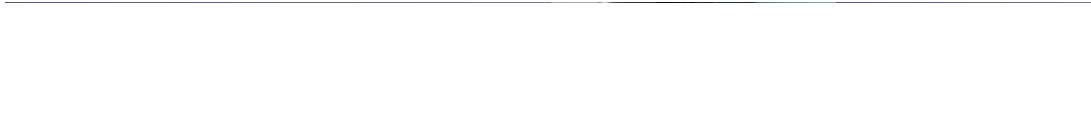
“In 1993, after many years of careful planning and a bank merger, \$500,000 was set aside to be used to start a community foundation,” Rajotte said. “From that point a core group of Bristol area citizens met monthly for two years in order to ensure the establishment of a community foundation would succeed.”

This group included Edward Lorensen, Bob Merriman, Hap Barnes, David Preleski, John Smith, Terry Fletcher, Chris Ziogas, and Sherwood Anderson. In the spring of 1995, the Main Street Community Foundation was incorporated. And, by the fall, I. R. S. approval was secured. The first round of grants, totaling \$70,600, were awarded in 1996, Rajotte said.

President and CEO Susan Sadecki said the Main Street Community Foundation is “deeply proud” of its history and the foresight of its founders.

“The Founders’ vision was to create a place that serves as a single point of entry for anyone’s charitable goals,” she said. “Every day we are able to show our community that philanthropy can be for everyone. Community foundations are all about convening and helping to develop collaborative solutions. That’s what we strive to be part of all while honoring the charitable intentions of our donors.”

Seats are \$125 per person and can be purchased through the end of August by contacting Main Street Community Foundation.



To view the finalists for the “Circa 1995” grants, visit mainstreetfoundation.org/circa1995grants.

For more information, or to purchase tickets, visit mainstreetfoundation.org/30-anniversary or call 860-583-6363.

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