

# Men & Boys Fund awards record \$16,000 in grants

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A photo from “Outside Perspective,” one of this year’s grantees.  
Samantha Rajotte

BRISTOL — The Men & Boys Fund at the Main Street Community Foundation (MSCF) has awarded a record \$16,000 in grants to seven nonprofits working to improve the lives of local men and boys.

Samantha Rajotte, scholarship and program officer with MSCF, said The Men & Boys Fund was established by the Foundation's Board of Directors in 2016. It provides grants to organizations that address the needs of men and boys in Bristol, Burlington, Plainville, Plymouth, Southington and Wolcott. The mission of the fund is to "improve the quality of men and boys' lives, increase their self-sufficiency and assist them in making positive changes in their communities."

"Many of the needs of men and boys, especially their social and emotional challenges, are often overlooked," she said. "MSCF's Men & Boys' Fund is dedicated to meeting those needs in the local communities. From promoting healthy, outdoor activities for youth, to offering parenting support for dads, the Men & Boys' Fund is committed to support the social, emotional, and educational needs of men and boys."

Next year, Rajotte said, MSCF will be celebrating the 10-year anniversary of the Men & Boys' Fund. More than \$98,000 in grants have been awarded to local nonprofit organizations from the fund since 2016.

The following are the seven grant recipients from this round of funding:

Boys and Girls Club of Bristol – \$2,000 for the "Whisper Beyond the Noise" youth empowerment program for teenage males, ages 13 to 18. The program is intended to uplift, inspire and provide guidance through mentorship, storytelling and leadership development.

EdAdvance – \$1,000 for the Father & Son Build-A-Better Sandwich Challenge, hosted by Plymouth Family Resource Center. This program is intended to promote nutrition and foster meaningful father-son connections for boys and their dads.

Outside Perspective – \$4,000 for the continuation of the “Youth Excellence Project (YEP),” which provides at-risk male teenagers with adult mentorship in outdoor spaces to promote health and build resiliency to the challenges in life.

Plymouth Parks and Recreation – \$2,000 for “Lunch and Learn for Senior Men,” which provides monthly educational sessions with speakers. The program is intended to improve mental and physical health and support cognitive function through mental stimulation.

Shepard Meadows Equestrian Center – \$2,000 for their veterans program, which is designed to include interactive and experimental unmounted horsemanship to support male military veterans promoting mental, emotional and physical benefits through hands-on engagement with horses.

The Bridge Family Center, Inc. – \$1,000 for recreational and educational activities as part of the “Specialized Trauma-Informed Treatment Assessment Reunification (STTAR)” program for boys in Wolcott’s Hastings House.

Veterans Strong Community Center – \$4,000 for the “Sleep Savants Program”, which focuses on improving sleep in order to improve mental and physical health, reducing veteran suicide rates.

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