



Fairfield County Community Foundation

Media Contacts:

The Collaborative Alliance: Gina Blum, 203-329-7477

Fairfield County Community Foundation: Jeff Yates, 203-750-3212

jjyates@fccfoundation.org

Baton Passes for Helping Local Nonprofits

NORWALK, June 22, 2009 – Since 2001 the Collaborative Alliance has helped leaders of 95 Fairfield County nonprofits improve their organizations' effectiveness through collaboration, sharing best practices and providing professional development opportunities.

As of July 1, that work is being passed to the Fairfield County Community Foundation's [Center for Nonprofit Excellence](#), launched in March.

"The Collaborative Alliance's goal has been to strengthen the nonprofit sector," said Ceci Maher, chairperson of the Collaborative Alliance steering committee. "For eight years, we've helped nonprofit staff and board members build their skills. Going forward, this will be achieved more efficiently and effectively through the Foundation's Center for Nonprofit Excellence."

"The nonprofit leaders who serve on the Collaborative Alliance's steering committee are modeling an important example of collaboration for all of us," said Susan Ross, president and CEO of the Fairfield County Community Foundation. "By combining their talents and the Foundation's resources, we can do more to help nonprofits survive and thrive, especially during these challenging times."

Ms. Ross said the Center for Nonprofit Excellence will provide nonprofit leaders with a year-round calendar of workshops, information about the sector, as well as opportunities to share best practices, network and collaborate.

In 2001, nonprofit leader Len Miller brought together leaders from several Fairfield County nonprofits to assess whether there was interest in creating an alliance to encourage collaboration. Rev. Richard Schuster, recently retired executive director of St. Luke's Life Works, also played a key role in forming the new group. Goals were set and a meeting with over 40 organizations was held where strong support was expressed. The Collaborative Alliance was launched.

Since then, the Collaborative Alliance grew to 95 member nonprofits. It has held annual conferences and workshops focused on supporting both collaboration and the needs of the nonprofit sector. Nonprofits throughout Fairfield County have collaborated to build on strengths, increase knowledge and determine access to resources.

The Collaborative Alliance has been led by a volunteer steering committee, some of whom will serve on a new advisory committee for the Center for Nonprofit Excellence. Additional members are being recruited from Bridgeport, Norwalk and Danbury. The advisory committee will prioritize and create services that best meet the management needs of nonprofits in Fairfield County.

Current members of the Collaborative Alliance steering committee include: Chair, Ceci Maher of Person-to-Person, Stuart Adelberg of United Way of Greenwich, Karen Brown of Fairfield County Community Foundation, Marti Etter of The Ballet School of Stamford, Jeanne Franklin of Stamford Senior Center, Kiki Karpen of The Community Fund of Darien, Leah Kimmet of Horizons at New Canaan Country School, E. Phillip McKain of CTE, Sherry Perlstein of Child Guidance Center of Southern Connecticut, Novelette Peterkin of The Carver Foundation of Norwalk, Diane Rosenthal of Literacy Volunteers Stamford/Greenwich, Maurice Segall of Pro Bono Partnership, and Leigh Shemitz of SoundWaters.

For more information about the Center for Nonprofit Excellence at the Fairfield County Community Foundation, visit www.fccfoundation.org or contact Yolanda Caldera-Durant, Program Director, 203-750-3200, ycaldera-durant@fccfoundation.org.

The Fairfield County Community Foundation promotes the growth of community and regional philanthropy to improve the quality of life throughout Fairfield County. Individuals, families, corporations and organizations can establish charitable funds and contribute to existing funds. The Foundation also provides philanthropic advisory services, and develops and leads initiatives to tackle critical community issues. It is in compliance with the Council on Foundations' national standards for community foundations. The Foundation has awarded over \$110 million in grants to nonprofits in Fairfield County and beyond. For more information, visit www.fccfoundation.org.