Tips for Kids New Bedford was recently given the opportunity to bring a dozen kids from the Gomes Elementary School in the city's South End to its after school program, thanks to a three-year 21st Century federal grant given to the Gomes School.

The problem was how to get them to the program's headquarters at the Victory Park Warming House, from which they embark on bike trips and other adventures, said Bernadette Souza, Trips for Kids' Executive Director. Transportation is expensive, and would have to be arranged for the three-year life of the grant.

At a meeting of the SouthCoast Youth Alliance, a project of the Community Foundation with support from the Acushnet Foundation Fund, Ms. Souza had a conversation with Maria Rosario, Executive Director of NorthStar Learning Centers, about her program's transportation issues. NorthStar was already transporting kids in their van from Roosevelt Middle School to Gomes for after school programs, and offered to pick up and drop off the Gomes kids going to Trips for Kids, at least for this school year.

“I don’t know if that would have happened without the SouthCoast Alliance meetings,” Ms. Souza said. Instead of working in isolation, “We need to start drawing off each other's strengths.” It’s just this sort of collaboration that the Youth Alliance is trying to foster among its members.

The Alliance is a partnership of 16 New Bedford area youth-serving organizations dedicated to creating a seamless system and network of youth services in the SouthCoast for all children through youth development, open dialogue, advocacy, access to educational after-school programs, and community engagement. Among the challenges the Alliance has been tackling since its first meeting at a retreat in October 2014 are how to provide quality after-school programs along with transportation to and from them; how to raise money to support the Alliance’s work; and professional development for the staff at youth-serving organizations.

The Alliance is also now having conversations with the New Bedford School Department about the transportation issues that many of the programs face, according to Warren Berube, Youth Alliance Coordinator.

A team of Alliance members and Dr. Berube also recently attended a two-day City Symposium hosted by the Providence After School Alliance and the Rhode Island Foundation, “Creating Citywide After-School Systems for Youth Success.” The team tapped into Providence’s expertise and heard other cities’ ideas for developing after school, summer and expanded learning systems that engage community partners and schools.

“The SouthCoast Youth Alliance fills a critical communication and coordination gap,” Ms. Rosario said. “It is bringing together area youth-serving organizations to build genuine partnerships that promise to reach young people in positive and meaningful ways—that not only mobilize and coordinate resources to supporting youth, but also invite young people to imagine and use their talents to build a better world for all.”

Members include: 3rd EyE Unlimited; Boys & Girls Club of New Bedford; Community Boating Center; Dennison Memorial Community Center; Dream Out Loud; House of Music; New Bedford Art Museum/ArtWorks!; New Bedford Public Schools; New Bedford Recreation Dept.; NorthStar Learning Centers; PAACA; RAAP; Reel Serious; Trips for Kids New Bedford; YMCA SouthCoast; and YWCA of Southeastern Mass.

Pictured are teens participating in the New Bedford Art Museum/ArtWorks! Teens Reach Beyond program. The Art Museum is a member of the Youth Alliance.
2015 Highlights

• 2015 is our 20th Anniversary of matching philanthropy with community needs.
• We currently have 225 funds and $33.5 million in assets.
• More than $20 million in grants and program support has been distributed since 2005, $3.5 million in 2014 alone.
• At our Annual Meeting in June, we elected new officers and directors. Seth Garfield is Chair; Sister Kathleen Harrington Vice Chair; and Dana R. Norman, CPA, Lisa Strattan, and Vera F. Vadeboncoeur were elected as Directors.
• SEEAL, our longest running program fund, continues to make progress toward reducing the region’s energy consumption with the SouthCoast Energy Challenge, which has signed up about 17,000 area residents to take the Challenge.
• Our other Flagship Funds, AHA! and the Women’s Fund, have had busy and exciting years. See stories about their work below and on page 4.

AHA! New Bedford & Fall River Awarded Grants; Promote Regional Economic Development

By recently securing a $24,500 grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, AHA! (Arts, History, Architecture!) New Bedford received funding for its 17th and 18th years, becoming the longest continuously-funded program in Massachusetts.

Meanwhile, AHA! Fall River, its newly-launched sister program, received its first-year funding, increasing the AHA! brand in SouthCoast and further supporting the local creative economy. Both AHA! New Bedford and Fall River are projects of the Community Foundation.

“The support and confidence that the Mass Cultural Council has shown in the AHA! program in New Bedford has allowed us to brand New Bedford as an arts and culture community, build the creative economy profile, and be a recognized model for creative place making,” said Lee Heald, director of AHA! New Bedford. “With the AHA! Fall River program also being funded this cycle, it is an impressive win for the Southcoast.”

Dave Dennis, founder and coordinator of the Fall River AHA! night, said: “AHA! Fall River is extremely pleased to receive the Mass Cultural Grant, which will allow us to continue to grow and expand. Fall River looks forward to working collaboratively with our regional partners to continue to grow their local economies and enhance the quality of life on the SouthCoast.”

AHA! New Bedford has hosted monthly arts and culture nights in downtown New Bedford since July 1999, while AHA! Fall River has been hosting seasonal arts and culture nights since June 2014.

AHA! supporters and area artists show support for the statewide Arts Matter Day, which was October 23, 2015. Photo by Peter Pereira.
Summer’s Last Blast: A Night to Remember

Summer’s Last Blast brought more than 500 guests to Destruction Brook Farm in South Dartmouth on Sept. 11, and raised more than $130,000 for Community Foundation operations. Many thanks to our sponsors and our hosts, George J. Leontire, Esq., and William J. Milbury. *photos by Deborah Hynes.*
SouthCoast’s Gender Wage Gap:  
Women’s Fund Led Task Force Releases Recommendations

There is a definite gender wage gap in New Bedford and Fall River. Data that came out of a partnership between the Women’s Fund and the UMass Public Policy Center shows a real problem for women living in New Bedford and Fall River - they are battling troubling trends of wage inequity and poverty. Consider this data on women and wages in New Bedford released by Michael D. Goodman, Ph.D., Executive Director, the Public Policy Center and Associate Professor of Public Policy at UMass Dartmouth:

- In New Bedford, a single working mother of two must earn $25 per hour, more than double minimum wage, to independently cover basic family living expenses.
- The annual median salary for New Bedford women is $33,397; the median income for a single mom in New Bedford is $19,364. This is about $10,000 less than that of men across all sectors and education levels.
- Yet the annual pre-tax earnings required to meet expenses for a family with one adult and one child is $46,499. Add another child and the cost of self-sufficiency goes up to $60,722.
- One third of New Bedford families are headed by a single female; 38% of these families are living in poverty. 11% of single moms who work full time/year round are still living in poverty.

Motherhood impacts wages and hours. Lower wages paid to mothers (5% per child) accounts for much of the wage gender gap. This is influenced by discrimination as well as the impact of child care on job choice and hours worked.

The Task Force on Pathways for Women to a Living Wage, led by the Women’s Fund, was launched in February 2015 with a goal of creating a clear path for women to become economically self-sufficient. The Task Force has brought together local community members and leaders, including experts on women, employment, education and social issues, to discuss the obstacles to women’s economic self-sufficiency and to recommend solutions. At the annual Women’s Fund Leadership Breakfast in October, the Task Force released its recommendations:

- Increase access to quality free/affordable early education and child care;
- Create gender, racial and ethnic equity in employment, benefit and wages through legislative, legal and collaborative partnerships, including equal pay legislation;
- Increase living wage focused education access and completion for low income girls and women, and girls and women of color;
- Improve funding, services, access and awareness for all girls and women, especially low income girls and women and girls and women of color to assure health, safety and well being;
- Prioritize funding, needed policy changes, and services for low income women and women of color in stabilization and safety net programs;
- Increase women’s civic leadership and political participation, especially low income women and women of color.

To see more detailed strategies on how to accomplish these goals, see the full recommendations at http://womensfundsema.org/wordpress/task-force-recommendations/. These recommendations will serve as a blueprint for the Women’s Fund grants and activities going forward. A separate working group will drive forward each recommendation goal. To get involved, contact the Women’s Fund at 508-717-0283.