

# Area foundation approves grants to aid local families

2/5/01

The Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts has approved grants totaling \$85,600 to Franklin Community Action Corp., Montague Catholic Social Ministries Inc. and Franklin County Community Development Corp. for programs to help children and youth in Franklin County.

Grants were made through the Community Foundation's Proactive Initiative for Children and Youth, a three-year program that will provide \$750,000 for projects that meet specific community needs in Hampden, Hampshire and Franklin counties.

With this funding the Community Foundation has more than doubled the resources that it has made available to Franklin County.

A grant of \$28,600 to the Montague Catholic Social Ministries will fund a collaborative project to increase parent education for families with newborns up to 5 years old through the Gill-Montague and Greenfield Family Centers. The project will expand the services of the Montague Catholic Social Ministries and the Franklin County Family Network, a program operated by FCAC, and will use the resources of

the Artspace Community Arts Center in Greenfield, Greenfield Community YMCA, the Massachusetts Department of the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, and the United Arc. The project is to increase hours at the family centers and offer additional resources for parent support programs.

Young entrepreneurs, ages 13 to 21, will benefit from a \$30,000 grant to the Franklin County Community Development Corp. to create entrepreneurial training and business de-

velopment opportunities through the Young Entrepreneurs Society Regional Coordinating Committee, a collaboration of 16 social and human service agencies, educational institutions, and youth organizations.

FCAC will receive a grant of \$27,000 to fund the Children's Resource Link project, a program designed to enhance the county's services for children, ages 6 to 12. The project will provide a clearinghouse to link various community resources with non-profit organizations that have specific needs for materials, goods and volunteers. The group of organizations involved in the planning of this project saw a need to engage new community shareholders in meeting community needs and to develop three local Children's Councils to facilitate this project.

"We are pleased by the high degree of collaboration among these organizations, and their eagerness to share resources to implement creative programs," said Nancy Reiche, program officer of the Community Foundation. "We are especially excited to see additional con-

tributions subsequently augment the limited resources we can make available for these purposes in Franklin County. They have enabled us to help organizations do more and make a difference for the children and youth of the county."

These grants were made following a yearlong planning and development process spearheaded by the Franklin County Action Group on Children and Youth. Many local groups included the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, United Way of Franklin County, North Quabbin Community Coalition, and FCAC, and included participation from over 20 organizations serving children and youth. There was involvement on the part of representatives of the business community, parents groups, educators, and public officials. This planning initiative to analyze needs and establish the Action Group in Franklin County was funded by the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts last year.

The Community Foundation also funds programs in the arts, human services, education, housing, health, and the environment.