

Award totaling \$97,000 will support New Bedford workforce development and literacy programming

The SouthCoast Community Foundation announced today \$97,000 in grants from the Polaroid Fund to nine local nonprofits seeking to enhance the skills and education of the New Bedford workforce. The award recipients include The Arc of Bristol County, Community Economic Development Center of Southeastern MA, Junior Achievement of Southern Massachusetts, Inc., Marion Institute, New Bedford Art Museum/ArtWorks!, Portuguese United for Education d/b/a/ Discovery Language Academy, School on Wheels, United Interfaith Action of Southeastern Massachusetts, and YWCA of Southeastern MA.

“Supporting nonprofits that are helping New Bedford’s newest community members build the skills necessary to attain their educational and employment goals is an honor,” said SouthCoast Community Foundation President John Vasconcellos. “Every year, we are inspired by the tenacity and passion of all involved, whether it be the dedicated instructors or residents committed to a better future.”

Grantee United Interfaith Action of Southeastern Massachusetts was awarded \$15,000 to address inequities in vocational education admissions. “The Polaroid Grant of the SouthCoast Community Foundation enables us to make significant progress on our multi-year effort to improve the educational experience for all our students and increase access to good jobs and sustainable living in New Bedford,” stated Andrea Sheppard Lomba, Executive Director, United Interfaith Action of Southeastern MA. “This includes our work with community leaders throughout the South Coast and in a statewide

coalition to reverse the current, restrictive admissions policy of vocational schools so English learners, students of color, students with disabilities, and students that are economically disadvantaged have an equal opportunity to pursue this path of learning.”

Also receiving support is Junior Achievement of Southern Massachusetts with an award of \$8,000 for their Bilingual JA Company Program. “This support allows us to expand our Spanish Bilingual JA Company Program, Programa La Compañía JA, which empowers high-school students to build and manage their own start-up businesses,” said Jeffrey Pelletier, Junior Achievement of Southern Massachusetts President. Students will be able to enhance their language skills and learn foundational business concepts while working as a team guided by community mentors. We are deeply thankful for this investment in the future entrepreneurs and leaders across our community!”

Additional grantees include:

- The Arc of Bristol County – received \$7,000 for its Special Educational Empowerment Program.
- Community Economic Development Center of Southeastern MA – received \$15,000 for virtual and in-person English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and summer tech literacy.
- Marion Institute – received \$13,500 for promoting health equity for Adult Basic Education (ABE) and ESOL families.
- New Bedford Art Museum/ArtWorks! – received \$15,000 for their Learning Studio: Early Literacy Through the Arts.
- Portuguese United for Education d/b/a/ Discovery Language Academy – received \$6,000 for their Adult English Language Program with family support.
- School on Wheels – received \$7,500 for students impacted by homelessness & COVID-19.
- YWCA of Southeastern MA – received \$10,000 for residential services.

For more than a decade, the SouthCoast Community Foundation has managed the New Bedford based grant program of the Polaroid Fund. The SouthCoast Community Foundation is a nonprofit serving thousands of people throughout Southeastern Massachusetts who share a common goal of improving the quality of life through philanthropy. Since 1995, the Community Foundation has distributed over \$50 million from more than 200 funds to humanitarian, educational, and cultural organizations in the region. For more information, visit www.southcoastcf.org.