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Foster Grandparent Program Receives Grant from Merchants Bank

May 2, 2014 (South Burlington, VT) – Merchant’s Bank awarded a \$10,000 grant from the Merchants Bank Foundation to support the Foster Grandparent Program, a program facilitated by United Way of Chittenden County. The priority for this grant is to support programs serving low-to-moderate income individuals and families.

Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) is designed to connect volunteers with rich life experience to opportunities that serve children and youth in need of support in school and mentoring. Foster Grandparents provide direct academic support in the classroom, a caring presence as mentors and help children recognize their potential, value, and place in school. As a result, children feel supported and connected to caring adults, and volunteers’ lives are enriched by participation in the program.

Foster Grandparents work with children ages 3-18 in early childhood programs, elementary and middle schools, and at a juvenile rehabilitation center. Volunteers work one-on-one with each child, but often connect with an entire classroom as a much loved “grandma” or “grandpa” to all of the students.

In 2013, 42 Foster Grandparents served 642 children at 30 sites in early childhood and elementary classrooms and contributed a total of 36,466 hours of service. The estimated minimum value of this volunteer commitment (based on Vermont’s average wage of \$21.01 per hour) totals a contribution of \$766,151 that supported educational support services in the local community.

For more information or to get involved with the Foster Grandparent Program and United Way of Chittenden County, visit unitedwaycc.org.

Additional Foster Grandparent Program Information:

The mission of UWCC’s Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) is to help children and youth achieve their potential in school and in life, by promoting school readiness, engagement in learning, and academic success.

FGP has been serving the local community for 37 years and has been sponsored by United Way of Chittenden County for the past 15 years. UWCC is committed to maintaining FGP under the United Way Education Impact Area because it is a highly successful strategy for helping children succeed in school. Foster Grandparent Program is funded by grants from the Corporation for National and Community Service, the State of Vermont, United Way, a few cities and towns, and individual donations.

(More)

About United Way of Chittenden County:

United Way of Chittenden County unites our whole community to solve complex problems and harness the power of people to create a stronger Chittenden County. United Way convenes advocates,

organizations and institutions to address the community's most pressing issues, focusing on the building blocks of a vibrant community: education, income and health. The problems facing our community are complex; they are issues that no single organization or individual alone can solve – real change is possible when nonprofit, public and private sectors work together. United Way has the networks, partnerships and strategic initiatives to improve the lives of our family, friends and neighbors. For more information or to get involved, visit unitedwaycc.org.

About Merchants Bank:

Merchants Bank believes in caring and sharing with the people and communities they serve. They show their support by donating to non-profit organizations, sponsoring community events and volunteering in local communities.

Established in 1849, Merchants Bank is the largest Vermont-based bank, independent and locally operated. Consumer, business, municipal and investment customers enjoy personalized relationships, sophisticated online and mobile banking options, more than 30 community bank locations statewide. Merchants Bank (Member FDIC, Equal Housing Lender, NASDAQ “MBVT”), and Merchants Trust Company employ approximately 300 full-time employees and 40 part-time employees statewide, and has earned several “Best Place to Work in Vermont” awards. American Banker ranks Merchants Bank #10 in America among 851 peers. www.mbvt.com

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