



AFP Newsletter | November 2015



## FEATURED MEMBER:

# Fiona Hodgson and the Fairfield County's Community Foundation

A tiny poem is taped to the computer screen in her office at the Fairfield County's Community Foundation, where she is the Vice-President of Development and Marketing. The poem, like Fiona, has a gentle, kind voice, yet packs a powerful message. Here is one of the two stanzas.

### IF YOU CAN SIT AT SET OF SUN

-by Robert Browning

*If you can sit at set of sun  
And count the deeds that you have done  
And counting find  
One self-denying act, one word  
That eased the heart of him that heard  
One glance most kind,  
Which fell like sunshine where we went*

*Then you may count that day well spent.*

Her 30 year-long career in philanthropy and marketing has been rich and varied, bridging several disciplines such as education, humanitarian aid, and research. Her employers have included Save the Children, the London School of Economics, Harvard Medical School, Brandeis University, and Boston College, to name a few. Fiona has traveled many miles. At one point, she was bi-coastal, working in London and living with her family in Connecticut-- as much as the job would allow.

Not interested in working to maintain the status quo, Fiona has built a reputation as a start-up and turnaround guru. At Harvard Medical School, she led an endowment campaign which funded new areas of research that never existed before, such as bioethics. Save the Children afforded her the opportunity to create their first ever endowment fund. Fiona ensured the campaign reached its ambitious goal of 400 million dollars! The fund enabled the charity to create new programs and to heed the call when global emergencies erupted. For example, after the Indonesian tsunami, Save the Children used the fund to rebuild thousands of houses, and partnered with AmeriCares to cover the costs of a prefab drop-in hospital deep in the mountains of Pakistan, following a devastating earthquake. The endowment was also used to build a new model of microfinancing loans, and to fund Saving Newborn Lives, a simple 5-step program that prevents child deaths in the first 24 hours of life.

And, finally at Fairfield County's Community Foundation, likely-the last stop in her career, Fiona was recruited to help take the foundation to the next level -- from functioning as a community funding instrument to focus anew on community leadership and impact. Many of you may be familiar with this major shift in funding priorities and practices, implemented last year.

The change at the Fairfield County's Community Foundation was initiated by focus groups, listening posts, and other research among diverse socioeconomic groups throughout the county. Four major issues of concern were identified and included: 1) education: Kindergarten-University, 2) lack of jobs for young people 18-25 (1 in 8 is unemployed), 3) the aging population and, 4) affordable, reliable, public transportation. In addition to providing funding, the foundation aims to solve these problems by bringing together all stakeholders in our county, including nonprofits, the media, advocacy groups, government, business, and civic and religious groups.

Back to that petite poem sited at the beginning of this piece-the one with the mantra about "doing good" that Fiona lives by. At the Fairfield County's Community Foundation, Fiona believes her job will be well done if one underprivileged teenager in Fairfield County gets the training he needs to secure a meaningful long-term job with a living wage, one woman living in poverty is able to realize her full potential, and at least one child is given the opportunity to live in safe, secure housing. If the future is any indication of the past, we predict Fiona will - as usual - not only reach but surpass her goals!

Fiona loves to spend time with her 10 grandchildren who live in America, England, Canada, and Denmark.

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## Summer Social on the Sound at the Riverside Yacht Club



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## Upcoming Events

**November 6**

**2015 National Philanthropy Day Awards Breakfast**

**8:00-10:30 at the Omni New Haven Hotel at Yale, New Haven**

**\$50 for one ticket and \$500 for a table of 10**

**All are welcome.**

The AFP breakfast will recognize local heroes who have helped change lives in our community through their work in philanthropy. Honorees will include Cindy Citrone of Southport who will receive the Award of Outstanding Philanthropist for her work with the Make-A-Wish Foundation.



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## New Members

**Cynthia Armijo**

*Executive Director*  
Westport Arts Center

**Catherine Bagg**

*Project Administrator*  
Norwalk/Nagarote Sister City Project

**Mr. Thomas S. Griggs Jr**

*Director of Development*  
International Festival of Arts & Ideas

**Mrs. Sallyan Pelletier**

*Board Chair*  
Liberation Programs

**Ms. Christie Stewart**

*Director of Development*  
New Reach, Inc.

**Susan Whitcomb**

*President*  
Haitian Educational Initiatives

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## Renewed Members

**Laureen Bubniak**

*Director of Development*  
Ridgefield Library

**Chrissy Cacace**

*Manager of Grants & Program Development*  
Family & Children's Agency

**Lawrence Carroll**

*Vice President for Advancement*  
Fairfield College Preparatory School

**Sharon Danosky**

*President*  
Danosky Associates

**Colleen Harkey**

**David Kweskin**

**Holly Lemoine**

*Chief Development Officer*  
Inspirica

**Janet Lindstrom**

*Executive Director*  
The New Canaan Historical Society

**Terrance O'Connor**

*Executive Director*  
Cardinal Shehan Center

**Olivia Ellwanger**

**Belinda Foster**

*Director, Operations & Development*  
Stamford Hospital Foundation

**Mary-Jane Foster**

*Vice President*  
University of Bridgeport

**Kristen Runk**

*Director of Development*  
Cultural Alliance of Fairfield County

**Janina Serrao**

*Director of Development*  
Family & Children's Agency

**Brook Urban**

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## Contact Information

For more information on AFP Fairfield County, visit our website at:

<http://www.afpfairfield.org>.

For questions related to events or membership, please contact our Chapter Administrator, Marianne Hickey at

[mariannehickey@afpfairfield.org](mailto:mariannehickey@afpfairfield.org).

To get involved with an AFP Board Committee, email board member, Lorraine Gibbons at

[lgibbons@shehancenter.org](mailto:lgibbons@shehancenter.org).

For questions or comments about the newsletter, please contact AFP board member, Anne Tack

[ATack@Tackwriters.com](mailto:ATack@Tackwriters.com).

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