

Working to benefit the community of Westbrook and its residents

## WESTBROOK FOUNDATION WILL AWARD UNPRECEDENTED \$146,000 IN SCHOLARSHIPS IN 2018



In a move that advances its mission to support Westbrook's young people in the formative stage of their lives following high school graduation—and in response to the skyrocketing costs of higher education—the Westbrook Foundation will award an unprecedented \$146,000 in scholarships to members of the Class of 2018 this spring.

The scholarships, which number nearly two dozen, will assist Westbrook residents of all socioeconomic backgrounds as they begin their post-secondary education at two- and four-year colleges, universities, and trade schools.

“The cost of higher education has grown astronomically over the past decade, and that trend only promises to continue,” says Foundation Co-Chair Connie Vogell. “It made perfect sense to us to increase the amounts of several of the scholarships we award to help ease the financial burden on Westbrook families sending their children into this all-important next phase of their lives.”

Board members kept the intentions of Barbara Spencer, the Foundation's founding benefactor, in the forefront of their minds when making this decision.

“Barbara Spencer was a career educator who deeply valued higher education, and I know she would have been thrilled to support this effort,” says Foundation Co-Chair Brian O'Connor.

Several scholarships bear Spencer's name, and they are among the many whose amounts have been substantially increased this year.

“Westbrook is one of the smallest towns in the state, with one of the smallest public school systems. It is extraordinary that we are able to offer opportunities of this magnitude to our students, thanks especially to the vision and planning of Barbara Spencer in 1984,” says Lawrence Lariviere, chair of the Foundation's Scholarship Committee.

An-Ming Truxes, a member of the Scholarship Committee, says that the Barbara Spencer Scholarships will become prestigious awards for which Westbrook's top students will compete each year—perhaps with their eye on the prizes as early as middle school.

Says Truxes, “These scholarships will not only motivate our brightest and most ambitious young people while they are in high school, but they will also follow them as they lay the foundation for what will no doubt be exceptional careers and adult lives.”

For more information about the scholarships the Westbrook Foundation offers, visit [www.westbrookfoundation.org/scholarships](http://www.westbrookfoundation.org/scholarships).

Local Postal Customer

PRST STD  
 ECRWSS  
 U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
 EDDM RETAIL

# FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

Sometimes “what goes around comes around,” and that turns out to be a very good thing indeed! Such is our view of our new hire for publicity, Meredith Crawford. Meredith has come to our organization with an incredible background in time management, writing and editing, content management, and production management, along with various computer skills and knowledge of relevant programs. She graduated from Westbrook High School in 1998 and, with the help of a scholarship from the Westbrook Foundation, went on to pursue her love of the written word at various higher education institutions, winning numerous awards along the way. Welcome, Meredith!

Another fortunate windfall for the Westbrook Foundation is our second new hire, Harry Ruppenicker, Jr., who has agreed to continue to keep track of our finances. Harry was the treasurer of the Foundation for many years and has extensive familiarity with the history of the Foundation, as well as the financial engines that keep us running. Harry served two terms on the Westbrook Foundation, having joined the group in 2008. Most people know him through his business, Harry’s Marine Repair, a full-service boatyard/marina established in 1965 by his parents, Harry and Marguerite Ruppenicker. Welcome, Harry!

Sincerely,



Connie Vogell

Six years ago I was approached to become one of the directors of the Westbrook Foundation. During my time as a Foundation director, I had the pleasure of serving on the Scholarship Committee. It has been very rewarding to help Westbrook’s students further their studies after high school graduation with the financial help of the Foundation’s scholarships. These scholarships have had a positive impact on the lives of the children who earned them and their families. Last year I began serving as the Westbrook Foundation’s co-chair, along with Connie Vogell. I thoroughly enjoy my role and its responsibilities.

The Westbrook Foundation consists of nine members. Our roles are two-fold: enhancing the community through the Foundation’s Grant Committee, and enriching the Westbrook public school system and its students through the Scholarship Committee. We are all very proud of the unique and special opportunity we’ve had as directors in being able to contribute to Westbrook’s quality of life.

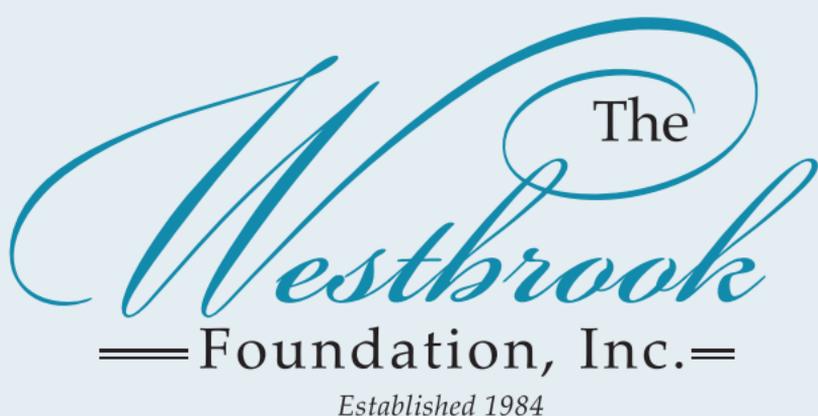
As a retired public high school social studies teacher and school administrator in Old Saybrook, I continue to operate my lawn care business. My wife, Alice, and I are very active retirees. This past fall we took a wonderful trip to Ireland (“the old sod!”), where my grandparents were born. In addition, we regularly enjoy family get-togethers with our three children, and we have also been blessed with five grandchildren who enjoy playing and having sleepovers at Pop Pop and Nana’s house. They especially love outings to Westbrook’s terrific town beach!

I look forward to continuing being a productive member of the Westbrook Foundation, a valuable and awesome organization for the town and the people of Westbrook.

Sincerely,



Brian M. O'Connor



## A Contribution to the Future

An individual or an organization who makes a gift or bequest to The Westbrook Foundation can be assured that he or she has made a contribution that will benefit future generations.

For more information about The Westbrook Foundation, visit [www.westbrookfoundation.org](http://www.westbrookfoundation.org).

## Flexibility in Giving

**CASH:** An outright cash gift to The Westbrook Foundation qualifies for federal income tax deductions in the year of the gift.

**SECURITIES:** Stocks and bonds that have increased in value may be given to The Westbrook Foundation. The donor receives a tax deduction for the value of the gift at market value, and avoids capital gains taxes.

**BEQUEST:** Bequests of cash, securities, or property may be made to The Westbrook Foundation either as a specific sum or as a percentage of the donor's estate.

**MEMORIAL GIFTS:** A gift to The Westbrook Foundation is a meaningful way to honor a special person or create a memorial to a loved one.

### LIFE INSURANCE/CHARITABLE GIFT

**ANNUITIES:** Donors may name The Westbrook Foundation as a beneficiary of life insurance policies. In the case of annuities, the donor may choose to retain income during his or her lifetime.

**CHARITABLE REMAINDER TRUST:** A donor may designate The Westbrook Foundation as the beneficiary of this type of trust and still receive income during his or her lifetime. Donor receives tax deduction in the year the trust is established, and reduces estate taxes.



## HELPING TO TELL THE STORY OF WESTBROOK

With items harkening back centuries, and archaeological artifacts reaching even further into history, the Westbrook Historical Society has a long and rich story to tell about the community. The Society has organized that story into an intuitive and enjoyable exhibit with the assistance of talented museum consultant Brenda Milkofsky—and the Westbrook Foundation has been pleased to play an integral part in the initiative.

“Everything we have been able to achieve through reorganization of the museum has been achieved through the generosity of grants from the Westbook Foundation,” says Westbrook Historical Society President Catherine Neidlinger Doane.

In recent years, this has included retaining the services of Milkofsky, who has structured the Society’s exhibit into a compelling narrative titled *Westbrook Stories: Tales of Land & Sea*. Each unit offers a chapter heading and synopsis, while smaller descriptive text blocks help to clarify an artifact or idea within the unit. The scale of the exhibit suits both visitors with limited time—those who may pop in to the Society before the start of the annual Muster or annual tree lighting, for example—as well as history buffs who want to do a deeper dive into the many primary source materials available.

Grants from the Foundation in recent years have also supported the Society’s preservation efforts by funding the purchase of protective window coverings, archival boxes, and updated office equipment. In short, the Foundation has

helped the Historical Society to reimagine itself and preserve Westbrook’s legacy for future generations.

“We are so very grateful to the Foundation for providing us the opportunity to serve Westbrook’s community with an updated museum that will not only tease the visitor to want to learn more about so many aspects of what makes Westbrook unique but will serve to protect its artifacts with updated museum standards,” says Doane. “I know that Barbara Spencer would have been so pleased.”

For more information about the Westbrook Historical Society, visit <http://westbrookct.us/civicorganization.php> or call 860-399-7473.



Photo courtesy of the Westbrook Historical Society

**In 2017, the Westbrook Foundation awarded a total of \$134,970 in grants to community programs and projects.**

The following scholarships are awarded to Westbrook residents each year. Full descriptions of each scholarship can be found online at [www.westbrookfoundation.org/scholarships](http://www.westbrookfoundation.org/scholarships). Help to increase these scholarships by contributing to the fund principal of your choice:

- Calderari-Hoxsie-Schubert-Steinson Veteran’s Memorial Scholarship
- Josephine S. Crump Scholarship
- Eileen M. Daily Scholarship
- Dorothy Christopher Hoyt Scholarship
- Oscar Manstan-Richard Nolf Memorial Industrial Arts Scholarship
- Marie Mazeau Scholarship
- Patricia Mazeau and Myrtie Gareau Scholarship
- Messerschmidt Scholarship
- Herbert A. Muller, Jr. Memorial Scholarship
- Ellen S. Murphy Scholarship
- Joanne Marino-Murray Scholarship
- Brandon E. Norman Memorial Scholarship
- Dan Nuhn Memorial Scholarship
- Tom ODell Scholarship
- Henry Ortner, Jr. Memorial Scholarship
- Shoreline Amateur Radio Club Scholarship
- Barbara Spencer Memorial Scholarships

- Elliot A. Spencer Memorial Scholarship
- Nicholas P. Tragakes Scholarship
- Westbrook Grange #123 Scholarship
- Raymond L. Wilson Scholarship

I am considering making a contribution to The Westbrook Foundation and wish to be contacted by a director of the Foundation to discuss it.

My contribution is enclosed, and I would like it to be applied to the fund principal for the following existing scholarship.

Enclosed please find my company’s matching gift form.

I would prefer my gift to remain anonymous.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone No.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Become a partner in philanthropy through annual giving. Please make checks payable to The Westbrook Foundation, Inc. All gifts are tax-deductible.*

### For Further Information

An individual contemplating a gift to the Foundation should seek the advice of his or her attorney.

This mailer was prepared as reference material, and further information, including copies of the Certificate of Incorporation, and the By Laws of the Foundation may be obtained from:

The Westbrook Foundation, Inc.  
P.O. Box 528  
Westbrook, Connecticut 06498

### Directors

Eve Barakos  
Bernadette Jones, *Vice Chair*  
Lawrence Lariviere, *Treasurer*  
Brian O’Connor, *Co-Chair*  
Paul Polo  
David Russell  
An-Ming Truxes, *Secretary*  
Paul Winch  
Constance Vogell, *Co-Chair*

### Administrative Director

Nancy J. Howard

### Public Relations

Meredith Crawford

### Honorary Members

Edmund Binder  
Jane Butterworth  
James M. Crawford  
Janet Dickey  
Teri Gavigan  
John Hall III  
Robert Kindt, Jr.  
Judith Lowe  
Joanne Marino-Murray\*  
Donald Morrison\*  
Barbara Reeve  
Harry Ruppenicker, Jr.  
Beverly Schirmeier  
Johanna Schneider  
Claire Anthony Smith  
Michael Wells, *Attorney*  
Richard Westbrook

\* *Deceased*

## SUPPORTING VETERANS WITH PTSD

Twenty-two is a critical number in Ray Hayes' life. It represents the estimated life expectancy, in minutes, for a radio technology officer (RTO) once engaged in combat in Vietnam. It's also the approximate number of U.S. military veterans who commit suicide every day. Having defied the first statistic—Hayes survived 13 months and four days in combat as an RTO in the 82nd Airborne—he's working to overcome the second.

In 2015, Hayes established Pay4ward, a nonprofit that takes veterans out on the water and teaches them to sail in an effort to help alleviate symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Hayes himself was diagnosed with PTSD in 2008, and he knows firsthand the stigma and real-world consequences associated with the illness. Many veterans would lose their jobs if they were to disclose their diagnoses or even seek treatment, he says. Hayes sees it as his life duty to provide a sympathetic ear, but also structured guidance, to those who are suffering.

"The military gives you all of these instructions and tools for how to stay alive" in combat, says Hayes, "but it gives you nothing to help you survive your life afterward."

Hayes began to see the need for a recreational program that would support vets with PTSD when he went on the first of several Outward Bound trips designed for military veterans in 2011. As the elder in a group of

young combat veterans, Hayes noticed the frequency with which the younger men and women would turn to him to share their stories and seek advice. He also noticed the sense of peace that came from the trips' sailing lessons.

"It had such a positive impact on all of us," he recalls. He began to wonder how he could replicate the experience at home in Middlesex County.

Inspired by those trips, Hayes left his job as head of facilities at Westbrook Public Schools and founded Pay4ward with \$20,000 he withdrew from the bank. Today, he estimates he has taken out 92 men and women on the sailboat he docks at Harry's Marine Repair in Westbrook.

Sailing can often be stressful and even triggering for veterans, Hayes points out, as the teamwork and hierarchy it entails can recall the heightened emotions of combat situations. Hayes believes that calling upon these familiar skills cemented during military service, and redirecting them toward a positive and relaxing outcome like a successful day's sail, can help to rewire the brain.

Pay4Ward is the recipient of a \$2,000 Westbrook Foundation grant that will enable Hayes to purchase new sail lines and other necessary equipment. He's grateful to the Foundation for helping him to make a

difference in the lives of combat veterans throughout the state. It's a mission he thinks of, not coincidentally, as "paying it forward."

"I can't pay back the two men who saved me," says Hayes, referring to one of his worst nights in combat, when, delirious from a scorpion bite, he passed out in thick jungle cover only to wake up in a hospital the next day, delivered to safety by anonymous soldiers. "So I have to pay it forward."

For more information about Pay4ward, visit [www.pay4ward.org](http://www.pay4ward.org).



Skipper Ray Hayes, a Vietnam War combat veteran. Photo courtesy of Ray Hayes

## LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR THE Y'S NEXT INCARNATION

As communities grow and change, so, too, do their needs. Nowhere is that more apparent than at a responsive, user-focused organization like the Valley-Shore YMCA.

"Our membership and program use have been growing steadily over the past few years," says Chris Pallatto, executive director of the Westbrook-based YMCA. "We've had almost 10 million visitors come through our facility since 1974. We've really outgrown our space as it was designed."

Since, as Pallatto says, "every Y is built by the community," it made sense to poll existing Y-goers and community stakeholders when it came time for the Y to determine target areas for improvement and enhancement.

What do users want? For starters, infrastructure and safety updates, as well as renovations to ensure ADA compliance; that means adding an elevator. Other features include a new child-watch area, new exercise studio, new wellness center, and a new program center for children and the arts. There will also be a kitchen in which children and families can learn to prepare healthy meals.

Many also pointed to the need for affordable arts and sports programming for their children.

"What came to the top of the list is that people want more non-competitive activities and artistic opportunities for their children, and they feel that there are not a lot of affordable options for that on the shoreline," says Pallatto.

The multi-million-dollar project will be funded primarily by private donations from citizens. The Westbrook Foundation provided significant support in the form of a \$100,000 grant awarded to the Y in 2017.

"Membership dues keep the lights on, but capital campaigns" that enliven buildings and provide new and enriching activities "come from the community," says Pallatto.

"The Westbrook Foundation is going to help us reimagine the Y for the next 100 years... This is an amazing leadership grant to help us better serve the people of Westbrook."

Pallatto adds that it's fitting that the Foundation has provided this leadership grant, as "Westbrook makes up the largest contingent of our membership."

Pallatto says the capital campaign will run for approximately 12 to 16 months. Construction on the existing facility could begin as early as 2020.

For more information about the Valley-Shore YMCA's capital campaign, visit [www.vsymca.org/capital](http://www.vsymca.org/capital). To discuss making a donation, call Chris Pallatto at 860-399-9622.



Rendering of proposed renovations courtesy of Chris Pallatto

## WHERE THEY ARE NOW

*Catching up with two past recipients of Westbrook Foundation scholarships*

### DR. NICHOLAS CRAWFORD, Westbrook High School Class of 2001

**Current City:** Toulouse, France

**Undergraduate Degree:** B.A. from New York University Gallatin School of Individualized Study, 2005

**Graduate Degrees:** M.A. in History from Harvard University, 2011; Ph.D. in History from Harvard University, 2016

**Current Position:** Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Toulouse School of Economics

**Advice for Students About to Graduate from High School:** Keep learning a foreign language, if you don't speak one already!

Q. What have you been up to since graduating from college?

A. After a stint working in the publishing industry in New York following graduation, I embarked on a career as an academic historian. I received my Ph.D. in early American history at Harvard University in 2016, specializing in the study of slavery in the British Caribbean colonies in the 18th and 19th centuries.

I'm currently a postdoctoral research fellow at an interdisciplinary institute at the Toulouse School of Economics in Toulouse, France, where I'm revising my dissertation into a book manuscript for an academic press. After Toulouse, I hope to return to the U.S. and work as a teacher and/or researcher at a university, museum, or archive.

Q. What's the biggest challenge you've faced in your professional life, and how have you tackled it?

A. The process of researching and writing a dissertation is essentially one major challenge that goes on for four or five years—and anyone who finishes one will attest to feeling at many times that it will never be completed! You need to have tremendous amounts of patience to earn a doctorate, but you also need a bedrock of skills—critical reading, analytical thinking, argument-based writing—that you can fall back on to keep faith in your abilities when the challenge seems too

large. I always think back to the excellent training in these skills that I received during my time at WHS, in particular in courses in history, English, writing, and foreign language. The instruction was often truly above and beyond what students are normally exposed to in high school and prepared me very well for college and graduate school.

Q. How have your Westbrook connections enriched your adult life?

A. I've kept in touch with several classmates and teachers from Westbrook. In particular, I correspond regularly with Dr. [Thomas] Truxes. I ended up specializing in the same general area of academic history as he does, and he's helped me enormously over the years with research advice as well as more general pointers about life in academia. It's pretty cool to be able to enter into the same profession as one of your mentors.



Photo courtesy of IAST Pictures

### KATHERINE CLEMENTS, Westbrook High School Class of 2010



**Current City:** Washington, D.C.

**Undergraduate Degree:** B.A. in Neurobiology from Harvard College, 2014

**Current Position:** Legal Research Assistant for the Sierra Club Environmental Law Program

**Advice for Students About to Graduate from High School:** Challenge yourself. Whether it's traveling abroad for a year on your own, enrolling in courses that truly interest you even if they're challenging, or hiking to the top of a mountain for the first time, just constantly challenge yourself.

Q. What have you been up to since graduating from college?

A. I've taken time to explore different professional paths. I've always known I wanted a career that gives back to the community, but the question remained how. I worked in psychology research and debated pursuing a Ph.D., and also worked in clinics and laboratories and considered medical school. But ultimately, I chose to pursue a career in law because it

capitalized on my strengths, interests, and passions. One of those passions is the environment. This was certainly cultivated from my time growing up in Westbrook along the shoreline and in a family that appreciated the environment.

I think there's an incredible value to protecting our natural resources in a manner that supports economic growth. Unfortunately, things as simple as clean water and air have become politicized, and at the moment, the legal system remains one of the most effective tools to defend the environment in the United States. Currently I'm working as a legal assistant for the Sierra Club in Washington, D.C., and am incredibly excited to be using my knowledge, experience, and passion on behalf of this organization—and soon by attending law school—to help defend our precious natural resources.

Q. What's the biggest challenge you've faced in your professional life, and how have you tackled it?

A. A major challenge was pivoting from medical school to law school. I needed to find the courage to do something that felt true to myself, knowing that either way I was building a career where I could make a meaningful contribution to my community, even if doing so through law was a less direct and tangible difference to those around you, but hopefully even more enduring for generations to come.

Q. How have your Westbrook connections enriched your adult life?

A. My high school field hockey coach [Janet Dickey] is also my aunt, which is a benefit of small-town life. As an adult, I think back frequently on the lessons she taught the team: "Don't focus on what you can't control; focus on what you can control. You can't control the bad referee calls, the weather, or the divets in the field, but you can control how hard you practice and how hard you play." That advice still guides me to this day.

**In 2017, the Westbrook Foundation awarded a total of \$86,900 in scholarships to Westbrook residents pursuing higher education.**