



Working to benefit the community of Westbrook and its residents

# AMID ESCALATING HIGHER ED COSTS, FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIPS PLAY VITAL ROLE FOR WESTBROOK YOUTH

It's no secret that the costs of higher education have increased exponentially over the past few decades. Today's young adults are often saddled with debts so burdensome that many financial experts believe this generation will still be paying off their student loans as they approach their retirement years.

Now more than ever, the scholarships the Westbrook Foundation awards to graduating high school seniors are vital to ensuring the town's young adults can successfully navigate the next phase of their lives—and are able to do so with less financial strain.

Here's what a few of the most recent Westbrook Foundation scholarship recipients have to say about how their awards have impacted them:

“The scholarship I received last spring not only made a big difference for me and my family financially, but it also showed me that there are a lot of people back home who are rooting for me and are invested in my future. College is hard enough as it is, so having that support helps me focus on school and what is important, and not worry about money. I have worked really hard to get to where I am today, but without my scholarships I would not be learning at my dream school.”

**Christine Banks**

*Westbrook High School Class of 2018  
University of New Hampshire Class of 2022*

“The scholarship I received from the Westbrook Foundation has been an enormous help to me, especially since I have been working to pay my own way through college so I will not have any loans when I graduate. Knowing that I got the support from a foundation in my own town means a lot to me and gives me the incentive to do well knowing that they have faith in me.”

**Justin Heilmann**

*Westbrook High School Class of 2018  
Central Connecticut State University Class of 2022*

“The scholarships allowed me the opportunity to attend the school of my choice and help offset the rising cost of higher education. I find myself fortunate to live in a community that invests in its students.”

**Amanda Wilderman**

*Westbrook High School Class of 2018  
The College of the Holy Cross Class of 2022*

“I am so thankful for the scholarships that I received last spring! The scholarships enabled me to attend a rigorous and prestigious school that otherwise would have been more out of reach financially. I am so glad that I could end up here without such a heavy financial burden, thanks to the scholarships from the Westbrook Foundation.”

**Tirzah Blomquist**

*Westbrook High School Class of 2018  
The College of William & Mary Class of 2022*

Local Postal Customer

PRST STD

EGRWSS

U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

EDDM RETAIL



Some of the 2018 recipients of Westbrook Foundation scholarships with Foundation Co-Chairs Constance Vogell and Brian O'Connor, and Scholarship Chair Lawrence Lariviere.

# FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

As winter winds down and the days grow longer, I find myself eagerly looking forward to spring. There are so many lovely places to walk in Westbrook, whether you prefer a ramble in the woods in the northern part of town, a stroll on the beach in the southern section, or a walk at the Stewart McKinney Preserve. Soon there will be another very desirable walking area available to the public: The Westbrook Garden Club's 60th anniversary project is to create a meadow area at the entrance to the Salt Island Overlook Open Space area on Boston Post Road between the U.S. Post Office and Oxford Academy. The project is being funded by a grant from the Westbrook Foundation. While the project construction itself is being carried out by volunteer labor from the Westbrook Garden Club, scouts, and the Westbrook Conservation Commission summer interns—it's amazing what we can accomplish together!

The Garden Club project is just one of many initiatives benefiting town residents that the Westbrook Foundation is proud to support. Take a look through this Annual Report for more examples of the ways in which the Foundation helps to improve the lives of Westbrook's residents, from awarding scholarships to our young adults to ensuring the Public Library is able to provide access to cutting-edge technology to the community.

Sincerely,



Connie Vogell

The goal of the Westbrook Foundation is to receive and administer available funds to benefit the residents of Westbrook. We strive to meet the needs of our citizens in the educational, civic, medical, social, cultural, and recreational areas. The Foundation's goal is to help fund organizations to satisfy the needs of our citizens that are not met by other sources, and to assist new services by providing "seed money."

In 2018, the Foundation awarded 13 grants amounting to \$117,153, and 61 scholarships amounting to \$145,950. This year some of the organizations to benefit have been the YMCA, the Westbrook Public Library (via the Friends of the Library), and the Westbrook Garden Club. Grants from the Foundation may be requested and are awarded twice a year.

As co-chair of the Foundation, I thoroughly enjoy working with our committees and I receive great satisfaction from helping the residents of the town 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.



# NONPROFITS THANK WESTBROOK FOUNDATION FOR SUPPORT

Twice a year, in October and April, the Westbrook Foundation invites nonprofit, non-political organizations to submit grant applications for projects or initiatives that will benefit town residents.

During its most recent grants cycle in the fall of 2018, the Foundation awarded more than \$90,000 in grants. The outlay of funds comprised seven awards ranging in value from \$2,250 to \$50,000. Here's what a few of those grant awardees had to say about what the Westbrook Foundation's support means to their organization.

“We are so grateful for the Westbrook Foundation's generous support of the Valley Shore YMCA Capital Campaign\*. We have proudly served Westbrook and surrounding towns since 1917 and are diligently working towards renovating our much used and well-loved facility. The Westbrook Foundation's support will enable us to make our vision to expand family and youth programming in new safe, exciting, and inviting spaces a reality.”

**Chris Pallatto**  
*Executive Director/CEO, Valley Shore YMCA*

\*The Foundation also awarded a grant to the YMCA in support of its capital campaign during its spring 2018 grants cycle. Read a story about how that \$100,000 grant helped to jump start the multi-million-dollar campaign in last year's Annual Report online at [www.westbrookfoundation.org/annual-reports](http://www.westbrookfoundation.org/annual-reports).

“High Hopes Therapeutic Riding is a very grateful recipient of a \$5,000 grant from the Westbrook Foundation. This grant is hard at work providing financial aid to Westbrook residents so that those living with physical, emotional, and cognitive disabilities can benefit from all that High Hopes has to offer.”

**Sarah Crips**  
*Communications Manager, High Hopes Therapeutic Riding*

“Thanks to Westbrook Foundation, we'll be able to use aerial footage to capture the peace and beauty of sailing in the waters off Westbrook. We'll combine this with [Pay4Ward founder Ray Hayes'] message into videos that will let veterans know Pay4ward is just a sail away.”

**Jason Otrin**  
*Owner of On Course Drones*

Otrin is working with Pay4Ward to create a documentary for social media and the web that captures the organization's mission to reintegrate combat veterans with PTSD into society through sailing.



High Hopes Therapeutic Riding, one of the organizations that received a grant from the Westbrook Foundation in 2018, helps individuals with cognitive, physical, and emotional disabilities by leading them in therapeutic horseback-riding and equine-assisted activities. *Photo courtesy of High Hopes Therapeutic Riding*

**In 2018, the Westbrook Foundation awarded a total of \$117,153 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  
Paul Winch, *Secretary*  
Constance Vogell, *Co-Chair*

## Administrative Director

Nancy J. Howard

## Public Relations and Digital Media Consultant

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  
Richard Westbrook

\* Deceased

# GARDEN CLUB’S VISION FOR MEADOW TAKING SHAPE THANKS TO GRANT

A flowering meadow will soon mark the entrance to the Salt Island Overlook at 1411 Boston Post Road, between Oxford Academy and the Post Office, thanks to a project to mark the 60th anniversary of the Westbrook Garden Club. The Westbrook Foundation awarded the club a \$15,565 grant during its fall 2018 grants cycle to fully fund the project.

The Garden Club’s 35 members are busy at work on the project, which symbolizes both a culmination of six decades of volunteer efforts to beautify the town, and the club’s commitment to creating a recreational space that, thanks to its sustainable design, future generations will be able to enjoy.

Begun in spring 2018, this two-phase, multi-year project aligns with the club’s mission to “beautify the town center... and conserve pollinator health by using native plants,” said Project Chair Deborah Rie.

The project’s second phase begins this spring. Club members will first smother “unwanted vegetation with a layer of cardboard covered by woodchips,” Rie explained. Then “we will uncover and add grasses and perennials using a combination of seeds, plugs, and donated plants.”

Rie called the initiative a true “community project,” noting that Oxford Academy, future Eagle Scout Eric



Last spring, volunteers began clearing the land that will eventually become a flowering meadow at the entrance to Salt Island Overlook at 1411 Boston Post Road. *Photo courtesy of Deborah Rie*

Franco, and the Conservation Commission’s summer interns are integral to bringing the club’s vision to fruition.

Oxford Academy, which is adjacent to the parcel of land the meadow will occupy, “is working with us to supply water from conserved roof runoff, and they’re growing plants that we will transplant to the meadow. The seeds

[for the plants] were gathered last fall at the new town center parking lot urban meadow,” said Rie.

Franco plans to build a 40-foot boardwalk that will allow pedestrians to traverse a “vernal wet area” of the meadow.

Meanwhile, summer interns working for the Conservation Commission will help to water and prepare the soil at the site of the meadow.

Rie said the area between Oxford Academy and the Post Office will soon become an attractive focal point for the town: “The meadow will enhance the curb appeal of Westbrook’s town center and will be a bright spot to draw attention to the entrance and trails of the Conservation Commission-managed open space [called] Salt Island Overlook.”

In addition to its aesthetic value, the meadow will also serve as a proof point for the value of sustainable landscape design.

“We expect the meadow to become self-sufficient after three growing seasons,” said Rie. “It will be a demonstration of using native plants to support pollinators and birds.”

# FRIENDS + FOUNDATION = A TRULY 21<sup>ST</sup>-CENTURY WESTBROOK PUBLIC LIBRARY

As the 21st century progresses, the impact of technology on our lives becomes more difficult to ignore. Mastery of computer and coding skills can often be the deciding factor in one’s ability to succeed.

But how does a town-funded entity meet the financial demands of providing its community members with access to cutting-edge technology?

For the Westbrook Public Library, the answer is the Friends of the Library—and the Westbrook Foundation.

“The Westbrook Public Library is lucky to have the Friends, which is a separate and independent 501(c) (3) organization,” explained Librarian Lew Daniels.

The Friends’ status as a nonprofit organization entitles it to apply to the Westbrook Foundation for grant funding, and these grants enable the Friends to support library projects that fall outside the scope of what the town budget covers.

“The Friends of the Library are proud to be able to secure financial support for all of the ‘extras’ that help to make the library such an invaluable community resource,” said Friends President Elaine Crawford. “We raise money in two ways: through an annual fundraising appeal to Westbrook residents, and through grants we receive from the Westbrook Foundation, which has always been incredibly generous.”

In previous years, those “extras” secured through Foundation grants have included, among countless other items, membership in the Libraries Online (LION) consortium, WiFi access, computer work stations and software, and a digital projector, sound system, and lectern for the community room. Most notably, in 2007, a Foundation award of \$150,000 allowed the library to furnish its new children’s room.

This year’s Foundation grant, the seventh the Friends has received since 1998 from the organization, totals \$12,000. The Friends will use it to purchase 10 Mac Books, 10 PC laptops, software, and a lockable, charging storage station for the library. Students and the general public will be invited to use these computers to work on coding and other

critical computer skills. The software allows the computers to support instruction and workshops on these topics.

For Daniels, this grant is another reminder of how instrumental the Westbrook Foundation’s grants have been to ensuring that the library is an equal-access learning space that meets the needs of its 21st-century users.

At this point, “practically all the public-access computer equipment in the library has been purchased with grants provided by the Westbrook Foundation,” said Daniels. “All of us at the library—staff, board, and Friends—are profoundly grateful to the Westbrook Foundation for this consistent and significant financial support all these years.”



# WHERE THEY ARE NOW

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

## TAYLOR MCCAIN, Westbrook High School Class of 2016



### Currently Studying:

Undergraduate junior at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts, Class of 2020, with a double major in neuroscience and music.

### Advice for Students About to Graduate from High School:

The world outside of

Westbrook High School is filled with incredible opportunities. This is the time to really take advantage of the next chapter of your life. Remember when you were five years old sitting crisscross-applesauce on the floor being asked, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” Well, now is the time when you have the ability to take control of your future and become that teacher, doctor, lawyer, scientist, historian, writer, musician, or artist that you have always dreamed of being. Be the person that you would want your five-year-old self to look up to. You have your entire life ahead of you, and this is just the beginning. Get ready for an amazing journey!

Q. What have you been up to since graduating from Westbrook High School?

A. Since leaving WHS, I've been very fortunate to have many opportunities in both of my academic interests. My

first year at Smith, I began immersing myself in neuroscience and music. Next year, my senior year, I plan to complete a senior thesis in neuroscience while also applying for PhD programs. Ideally, I plan to go right into a PhD program following Smith to study music in the brain. Specifically, I want a career conducting clinical research with patients who have neurological disorders/diseases exploring how music can be used as a therapeutic tool or an alternative treatment to traditional Western medicine. I want to advance neuroscience in this area to discover how music impacts the brain on a biological and psychological level in order to advance the successfulness of music therapy.

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

A. The first day I arrived at Smith, I experienced intense impostor syndrome (the feeling of not being “good enough” in an academic setting). I was surrounded by hundreds of women who had graduated at the top of their class, most of whom graduated as their class's valedictorian. Throughout my first year, I worked through these feelings by connecting with professors and working through my classes. Since Westbrook High School is such a small school, my experiences at WHS prepared me to feel comfortable reaching out to my professors one-on-one. Most students at Smith did not have those same opportunities in high school, and I am very grateful

to have gone to a small school that has such wonderful and caring teachers. My relationships with the teachers at WHS helped, and continue to help, me thrive as a student at Smith.

Q. How did Westbrook prepare you for college, and how have your Westbrook connections enriched your life?

A. I truly believe that my high school experience was incredibly unique from most other students. From time to time while at Smith, I will mention a silly interaction that had happened in my group chat from home (which consists of eight of my friends from high school) and most of my friends will pause the conversation and reply with, “You still talk to that many friends from high school?” to which my response always is, “Of course! I talk to them every day.” Growing up with nearly the same 63 people from kindergarten through senior year of high school builds unbreakable bonds between not only friends, but other classmates. Not many people can say they know the first and last name of everyone in their graduating class, and almost no one can say that they know each of those people on a personal level. Keeping these connections with my friends has taught me that no matter where we all go in life, we'll always have this close bond that going to WHS has provided us with.

## JAMES HIRST III, Westbrook High School Class of 2002

**Current City:** Columbus, Ohio

**Undergraduate Degree:** B.A. in political science, minor in economics, from the University of Connecticut, 2006

**Current Position:** Senior Account Executive, Voluntary Benefits Specialist, at Unum

### Advice for Students About to Graduate from High School:

Work smart, play smart, live smart. And listen more than you talk.

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

A. For the past eight-plus years I have been an outside sales representative (national accounts) for Unum, providing key financial protection products to employees across Ohio, western Pennsylvania, Kentucky, and Indianapolis. My near-term goals include repeating as Sales Rep of the Year and helping our Ohio office to earn an Office of the Year award.

In the future, I plan to run my own Unum field office as a managing director, coaching and supporting a team of sales reps.

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

A. While I've been fortunate to avoid major challenges in my professional career, I consistently face minor, day-to-day obstacles being in a high-pressured sales position. Being a three-sport athlete (average at best) taught me how to win and lose with class. I was fortunate to have played for a handful of coaches who taught critical life lessons like that along the way.

Q. How have your connections with your Westbrook teachers and classmates enriched your adult life?

A. I'm the godfather to two of my Westbrook friends' kids (Mike Fosque and Jeff Maher), and I was best man in my friend Greg Talpey's wedding.

Equally as important, my sister was heavily influenced by one her teachers in Westbrook—Diane Lewis—who set her on the path to become a teacher both in Connecticut and in Chicago.

Watching her (sometimes from a distance) impact the minds of America's youth has been personally fulfilling.

Q. Would you describe your experience growing up in Westbrook and going to Westbrook Public Schools as unique?

A. Westbrook's school system provides a very unique experience. Westbrook's small classroom setting allows you more time to spend building meaningful relationships with your classmates and teachers. A lot of my peers graduated with hundreds if not thousands of other students, which would be a completely different experience. Building relationships, both personally and professionally, has been the foundation for my success—and it's a skill I learned in Westbrook.



**In 2018, the Westbrook Foundation awarded a total of \$145,950 in scholarships to Westbrook residents pursuing higher education.**