

OUR VIEW

Foundation puts money to good uses

The generosity of philanthropic organizations in Newport County is something that cannot be ignored. At every turn, it seems there is a group willing to step up to help with projects and initiatives across the area. And while donations may range from small to large, they all serve the same purpose of helping to better the community.

Among the most generous groups over the past three-plus decades has been the van Beuren Charitable Foundation, which since it was founded in 1986 has given more than \$65 million in grants to benefit the Newport County community. This includes \$5 million for more than 45 community projects in 2016.

The major grants in the past year include \$670,000 toward a new building on the campus of the International Yacht Restoration School on Thames Street, \$500,000 for Sail Newport's new community sailing center at Fort Adams State Park and \$400,000 toward St. Clare Newport's new senior living complex.

What makes these gifts so wide-reaching is how they are selected with an eye on improving the community as a whole to advance the foundation's three priorities of landscapes and the built environment, education and health. In addition, oftentimes grant recipients collaborate with other organizations and individuals on their projects, which helps to widen the scope of how many people will benefit.

"Whether it's the partnership of local agencies and

the Newport Public Schools to reduce chronic absenteeism or building upon our collective strength in undersea technology to generate future economic opportunity, organizations that collaborate find there is a multiplier effect applied to their impact," said Elizabeth Lynn, the foundation's executive director.

Other major grant recipients include the Aquidneck Island Planning Commission, Redwood Library and Athenaeum in Newport, the Aquidneck Land Trust, St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Newport and the Robert Potter League for Animals in Middletown.

The list goes on, and we hope the grants will, too, for many years to come.

It's not just the amount of money the foundation has been so generous to give, but how that money has propelled projects that have helped to transform Aquidneck Island into a place of which we all can be proud. From schools and libraries to state-of-the-art technology centers, Newport County is a very diverse and thriving community, and philanthropic organizations like the van Beuren Charitable Foundation are a major reason why.