

# Martha's Vineyard Donors Collaborative

## Our Island & Philanthropy

Summer and another season of great fundraising events are finally here. These events are wonderful and the organizations they support play a critical role in preserving the character of the island and its quality of life. We thank you for supporting them financially, the time you give and all the ways you help take care of our community.

But as the accompanying article shows, a growing "Philanthropy Gap" has created needs that can't be met by events alone. In real dollars, the average Vineyard non-profit receives less in contributions today than 10 years ago while population, demand for services and operating costs have increased; services and programs suffer or are lost. Non-profits need more philanthropy to cover this gap.

We need a thriving non-profit community. If philanthropy doesn't increase, the island will lose much of its charm for visitors and homeowners alike.

## What Can We Do?

If you love the island, invest in her future:

- Ask how important the Vineyard is to you and your family. Are you giving accordingly?
- Include The Vineyard in your annual giving and estate plans.
- Remember this real need when participating at fundraising events.
- Give more to your favorite Vineyard charities. Our on line Directory of Non-Profits has detailed information on the full range of island organizations.
- Give to the Permanent Endowment Fund, the island's Community Foundation, if you wish to make a lasting contribution. Call Ralinda Lurie, Executive Director at 508-338-4665.
- Volunteer or join a Board. Many organizations seek talented people to help them achieve their missions.

## Vineyard Philanthropy: The Ten Year Trend

Summer fundraising events are a fun and important part of Vineyard life. The generosity of our seasonal residents is the lifeblood of island non-profits and allows them to keep the Vineyard a special place. But before we begin bidding at auctions and running road races again, we should to step back and look at the big picture. Using IRS data from the National Center For Charitable Statistics to determine the current state of philanthropy on the Vineyard it becomes clear that our non-profits have a larger need that can't be met by events alone.

### 2006 A RECORD YEAR

In 2006 a record \$28.5 million was contributed to the 91 Dukes County public charities that were large enough to report to the IRS, a 98% increase compared to 1996. Untold millions more were contributed to our smaller non-profits and to all through volunteer and in-kind gifts.

Despite the 2006 record, philanthropy on the Vineyard has not kept pace with the mainland and in real dollars, contributions to the average Vineyard non-profit decreased 20% between 1996 and 2006.



### THE PHILANTHROPY GAP

Our non-profits are suffering from a growing "Philanthropy Gap." Giving has not kept up with inflation or with the growth in organizations while population and the demand for services have increased; services and programs suffered or are lost. Non-profits need more philanthropy to cover this gap.

The pressure is real. Ask any island non-profit; the AIDS Alliance went out of business, Island Food Pantry, VNA and Featherstone all had several years of deficits and Community Services closed its Visiting Nurse Services, a major program for island residents.

(continued on page 2)

**"In real dollars, contributions to the average island charity dropped 20% from 1996 levels vs. a 48% increase statewide..."**

## Thanks for Being an MV Donor...

Every gift to the Island makes a difference but here are some examples of Vineyard philanthropy we think deserve special recognition.

Betty and Ralph Franklin of Sarasota, Fla. have been summer residents of Christiantown since the 1950's and they were regular users and patrons of the West Tisbury Library. For over 20 years Betty

volunteered to work on the library's annual used book sale as a way of supporting an institution that was an important part of their life on the Vineyard.

Last year while in the process of making retirement plans, the Franklins had an opportunity to make a one-time gift of \$50,000 and they chose to give it to the Friends of the West Tisbury Library; one of the largest gifts the library ever received. (continued on p.4)

# The Growing "Philanthropy Gap"

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There is a delay in obtaining non-profit data but the trend is clear. From 1996 to 2006 for all 501(c)(3) public charities in Dukes County filing with the IRS (which means they have more than \$25,000 in total revenue) contributions grew 98% and significantly lagged behind Massachusetts, with a 148% increase, and that other island, Nantucket, which grew 251% (see graph below).

This lag was compounded by another factor. Following a national trend, the number of Vineyard non-profits increased during this period as new organizations were created to address important needs and make up for cuts in government funding. Vineyard House, Vineyard Healthcare Access Program, Habitat for Humanity, Island Affordable Housing Fund, Island Housing Trust, The FARM Institute, Polly Hill Arboretum and the Vineyard Energy Project for example were all founded during this period.

In fact the number of public charities in Dukes County reporting to the IRS during this period grew 78%, more than twice the statewide increase of 38% and slightly less than Nantucket's 85%. This means the Vineyard today has a lot more non-profits competing for a limited supply of funds, volunteers, Board members and managers.

Due to the relatively low growth in contributions and the high growth in the number of organizations, contributions to the average public charity only grew 11% during this period compared to an 80% statewide increase and 90% growth in Nantucket. After adjusting with the national Consumer Price Index, which woefully understates the cost of living on the Vineyard (see box on page 3), the average island charity saw a 21% real dollar decrease in contributions compared to a 48% increase statewide and a 58% increase on Nantucket .

This decrease in contributions comes at a time when many Vineyard non-profits are seeing an increase in the demand for services. Dukes County grew 20% over this period; the second fastest growing county in the state. The Vineyard's new residents skew toward the old/retired who use more per capita health and human services. These figures exclude the growth of a large undocumented population which further increases the demand for services.

Clearly, if philanthropy isn't increased significantly the island will lose much of its charm for visitors and homeowners alike.

## WHY DO WE LAG?

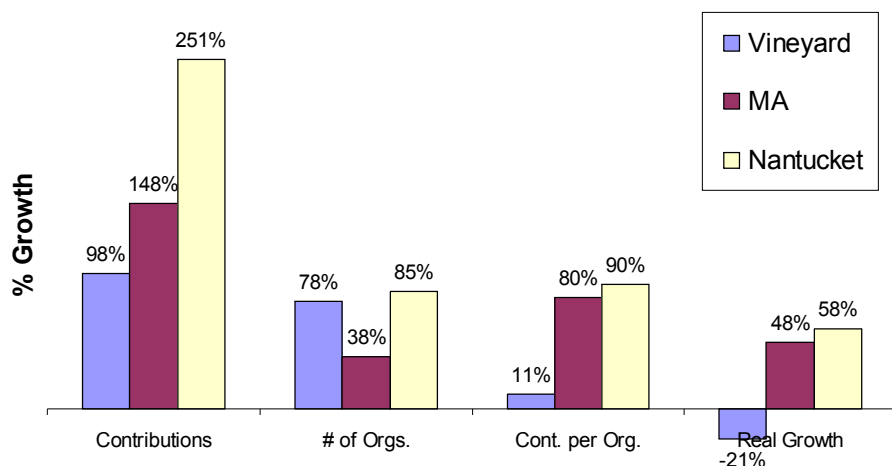
It's not clear why we lag. Some have argued that since Vineyard philanthropy comes primarily from seasonal residents it's understandable that contributions here lag behind the mainland; people tend to give more to the community they live in or to the schools they attended than to the community where their second or third home is located. We are very different islands, but the figures on the chart for Nantucket don't bear this theory out. This doesn't mean life is rosy for Nantucket non-profits (they have their own problems because real estate, construction and other living costs are much higher there) but is there something we can learn from our Nantucket non-profit peers?

## AS A COMMUNITY, WHAT DO WE DO?

As for the "Philanthropy Gap," Vineyard non-profits need to learn to do more with the limited resources they have. They must realize that the old laid-back Vineyard way of doing things won't work in this new competitive environment. There are many organizations with overlapping missions. Perhaps there would be operational savings through mergers, joint ventures and strategic relationships. They could evaluate and improve the effectiveness of their programs and cut those that don't make sense economically. They need to (continued below)

*If philanthropy isn't increased the island will lose much of its charm for visitors and homeowners alike.*

**Public Charities Filing Form 990  
Growth 1996-2006**



(continued from above)

Move beyond events as their primary source of fundraising and develop grant writing, annual campaign and planned giving capabilities.

For donors, the "Philanthropy Gap" raises a different question; how important is the Vineyard to you and your family and are you giving accordingly?

If you love the island, invest in her future. Have you included the Vineyard in your annual giving and planned giving/estate plans?

So let's grab our running shoes and auction paddles and enjoy the summer fundraising event circuit but realize that events aren't enough and we need to increase our philanthropy to the island if we want to preserve its character and the things we love about it.

## Summertime and the giving is easy....

### Give more without spending more...



Kidido's children's store in Vineyard Haven will donate 5% of your purchases over \$50 to the island non-profit or pre-school of your choice. Once you get a "Kidido's Kares" card and designate a recipient the giving program is effortless for both you and the non-profit. Payments are made quarterly. We salute Kidido's owner and long time Vineyard resident Danielle Bailey for her commitment to the community and hope other businesses will follow her example. Kidido's is located in the Tisbury Marketplace on Beach Road.

### Buy Tickets to Fundraisers on line...



The summer is so full of fundraising and other events there is now a website with a searchable event calendar to help you plan your schedule and buy tickets on line.

Ticketsmv is becoming the place to go to find out what's

happening on the Vineyard whether it's a benefit auction, a free lecture at a library, a performance at The Yard or a concert at Outerland. They're building an extremely detailed event database that's searchable by date range, promoter, event name and type and more and more non-profits are making tickets to their events available on line there. Some even tell you how many tickets are still available. There is a small processing fee but the service is free to the non-profit. Buying in advance insures you'll be able to get into your favorite events. Go to [www.mvtickets.com](http://www.mvtickets.com).

## The Martha's Vineyard Donors Collaborative is

an advocacy organization devoted to strengthening the non-profit community on the Vineyard. It does this by increasing the total amount of money donated to Vineyard charitable organizations and by helping those organizations improve their own capabilities through workshops and technical assistance.

The Collaborative is self funded, does not solicit funds for itself, does not choose among organizations to support, and does not provide access to donors without their permission.



## The High Cost of Living on The Vineyard

According to a Martha's Vineyard Commission survey, the cost of living on island is almost 60 percent higher than the national average; housing costs are almost double; and it's 12 % more expensive to live here than in Boston. More and more islanders are having a hard time making ends meet and this further increases the demand for housing, health and human services. Rising rent, utility and other operating costs erode program budgets for all Vineyard non-profits and further increase revenue needs.

Fuel and energy costs are growing everywhere but they have a greater economic impact on the Vineyard by increasing the cost of all goods transported here.

## How Can We Help You?

The Martha's Vineyard Donors Collaborative offers a number of Donor Services to assist you when giving to Vineyard non-profits:

### Donation of Securities

Many Island non-profits are small and don't have the capability of accepting donations of securities. However, you can still make contributions of appreciated stock by making a donor directed gift to us at the Donors Collaborative. We'll sell the securities upon receipt and pass the proceeds on to the organization as a gift from you. Contact our Executive Director for more information.

### Anonymity

Want to make an anonymous gift or several of them? Make a donor directed gift to the Donors Collaborative and we'll pass it on to the organization or organizations of your choice and maintain your complete anonymity. We'll also collect thank you letters/notes from the organizations and pass them on to you. Contact our Executive Director for more information.

### Donor Directory

Not sure who to contribute to? Our on line directory of non-profits has detailed listings of island charities by area of interest, including financial summaries, mission statements and list of officers and Directors. Go to [www.mvdonors.org](http://www.mvdonors.org)

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We salute them for getting involved with a part of the Vineyard they enjoyed, their long term commitment and their decision to include the Vineyard in their estate plans.

**Thank You, Thank You, whoever you are!**

One anonymous donor has pledged \$25,000 as a matching grant to the Island Grown Initiative (IGI) each year, for the next three years. If IGI succeeds in matching this generous donation it will receive \$25,000 'bonus rounds' for the subsequent fourth and fifth years.

Island Grown Initiative is a new non-profit that supports local agriculture. It has developed innovative programs involving island schools, farms and stores. But ambitious new organizations like IGI can't succeed without the commitment of visionary donors. The FARM institute, for example, only got started because of two visionary donors who pledged \$1,000,000 each.

We salute this anonymous donor for their vision and courage to support a start up operation and for leveraging their gift in a way that incentivizes others to contribute to the cause. Visit the IGI at: [www.islandgrown.org](http://www.islandgrown.org)

# Martha's Vineyard Donors Collaborative

## Board of Directors

- Barbara Bellissimo
- Jeremy Biggs
- Meg Bodnar, Treasurer
- Carole Cohen
- Cindy Doyle
- Samuel M. Feldman
- Inez K. Janger, President
- Gerald S. Jones
- Robin A. Leeds
- Beatrice Phear, Chair and Secretary
- Julie Skinner

## Executive Director

Peter Temple

# phi·isl·thro·py

(fill-isle 'thro-pee)

n. (Greek from *philis/thrōpia* - love of islandkind)

- 1: active effort to promote island welfare with a philanthropic act or gift.
- 2: something the island needs more of.

Due to a growing "Philanthropy Gap" our non-profits have a larger need that can't be met by events alone

Give generously to your favorite Vineyard non-profits this summer  
(and learn more about the "Philanthropy Gap" inside)

Thank you, from your fellow "islophiles" at  
The Martha's Vineyard Donors Collaborative

Be an MV Donor

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*Celebrating & Enriching Our Island*

Martha's Vineyard Donors Collaborative