

## COMMUNITY FUND SELECTS AGENCIES

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Since **the** year 2000, **the Community Fund of Darien** has raised and distributed more than \$6.5 million. And this year, **the fund** has once again raised more than \$700,000 that will be donated through **the fund's** yearly allocation process.

**The** process recently concluded and organizations in youth, family, elderly, abuse, food and shelter and other **community** services will be receiving part **of the fund's** money.

"We are not a foundation," said director Kiki Karpen.

"Foundations have money and invest it, and give away at least 5 percent. That is typically **the** interest they've earned on their money. We take money and give it out **the** following year, and run a relatively lean overhead, about 13 percent," she said.

Karpen said that most people don't do due diligence when giving money to a charity, and often choose it for sentimental reasons, which is admirable.

"They give because it touches their hearts or it impacts their families and we think that's wonderful. We just encourage people to do some homework and make sure their dollars are spent wisely," she said.

Karpen said that when people donate to **the Community Fund**, they can be assured that that due diligence is done.

"We encourage people to donate to us. These are organizations that many **of** them don't know but they want to have in their **community**, she said.

During **the** allocation process, volunteers carefully selected by **the fund** visit various charities in **the** area to determine where best to allocate **the** money. After **the** two-month process, **the** allocation panels offer their findings to **the** board **of the Community Fund**, and **the** board votes on those findings.

**The** agencies also benefit from **the** recommendations that **the Community Fund** makes to them, whether or not they are selected as one **of the** allocation recipients.

In addition, **the** volunteers who participate in **the** allocation process are able to educate **the community**.

"They become familiar with that agency and can become spokesmen to **the community**,"

Karpen said.

**The** 30 agencies that will be benefiting from this year's money include Child Guidance Center **of** Southern Connecticut, Kids in Crisis, Family & Children's Agency, **Darien**

Red Cross, Elderhouse, **the Depot**, Food Bank **of** Lower Fairfield County, Domestic Violence Crisis Center and **the** Americares Free Clinic, among many others in **Darien**, Norwalk and Stamford.

Also, in **the** past year, **the fund** has distributed an additional \$12,200 through its "Touch a Life **Fund**," \$10,400 in small grants and \$24,000 in donor designated contributions.

In addition, more than \$10,000 in small grant funding has been awarded to Norwalk Grassroots Tennis, Voluntary Services for **the Blind** and **the** Stamford Senior Center.

**The Community Fund** also provides emergency grants through its "Touch a Life **Fund**" to help **Darien** residents through difficult times.

In 2007-08, **the fund** provided over \$12,000 in financial assistance for identified clients **of Darien's** Department **of** Social Services to pay for such needs as flood damage, heating oil, electricity, child care, rent, medical and dental care.

**The Community Fund** received contributions from more than 750 individual and local business donors and 100 volunteers.

For more information on how you can help, contact **the Community Fund of Darien** office at 655-8775 or visit [CommunityFundDarien.org](http://CommunityFundDarien.org).

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