Board of Directors Profile

Patricia Herbert: 40+ years on the Board and still going strong ...

For longtime Board of Directors member Patricia “Pat” Herbert, the Community House, as well as her former school students and many others in West Haven, have been among her extended family. A retired teacher who never married, which she attributes with a twinkle in her eye to “my being able to say no,” is a living time capsule of West Haven history. These days, Pat, who first began serving on the Community House Board more than 40 years ago, remains active, even as she recently celebrated her 93rd birthday. Yet, she has lost little of the spark that is a hallmark of her personality.

A past Community House Board president, Pat has served many other local organizations in her time, including the library, Board of Education, Girl Scouts, and religious and civic groups, including being a founding member of the West Haven Land Trust, among others.

At the Community House these days, Pat is most active on the Endowment Committee, which manages a special fund that is nearing a milestone of its own. The Endowment fund will soon reach $500,000, at which point, according to its by-laws, certain proceeds can then be directed to benefit the programs and families served by the Community House. But that can happen only when the fund, totaling about $388,000 in the Fall of 2011, reaches $500,000.

Pat is a long-time financial supporter and urges citizens to consider making a donation or bequest to support the Community House’s Endowment Fund as a way to leave a lasting legacy. (See information on this page to learn more about how you can contribute to the Community House’s Endowment Fund.)

Community House Board member Sharon Martin, herself a former board president, recently marveled at Pat’s commitments and achievements. “To me, her commitment to the Community House and its work is unmatched for anybody over that length of time. Particularly moving to me is that Pat never loses sight of the real purpose of the Community House, which is helping people. I can still hear her say, ‘If we don’t take care of each other, who will?’ and I think that sentiment sums up what Pat is all about. She’s just phenomenal.”

Former Community House Executive Director Peter Schwartz is another who sings the praises of Pat’s lifetime work and commitment to West Haven and its people.

“A really good example of Pat’s everlasting contributions to the Community House was her role of helping to establish our before-and-after school child care program as a true partnership with the West Haven Board of Education,” Schwartz said. “Our program’s ability to serve such large numbers of West Haven children is based upon the Board of Education’s decision to allow us to use school buildings after school for our program. It was Pat Herbert, as a member of the Board of Education, who helped the educators understand the tremendous benefit to the children of West Haven and to the school system itself to have our program operate directly in as many public schools as possible.”

Speaking of his own personal experience with Herbert, Schwartz added, “Pat also epitomized the ideal partnership between Board President and Executive Director. She was always a tremendous source of support for me, while always bringing out in me the desire to strive for the best agency possible ... after all, after Pauline Lang, Pat has always been the 'Keeper of the Mission,' always reminding you, as Executive Director, why the Community House exists, and how important it is to the community that the agency survive and grow.”

Pat Herbert is certainly one of a kind, and the West Haven Community House has been very fortunate, indeed, to have her in its corner.

What do we live for if it is not to make life less difficult for each other? ~ George Elliot

Help our Endowment Fund grow

Do you have stocks or bonds, insurance policy proceeds, estate or other assets that you would like to donate knowing that it will have a lasting impact on the West Haven community, plus provide a tax benefit? If so, please consider making a bequest to the West Haven Community House Endowment Fund. All principal in the Fund will be held in perpetuity, with income from the principal distributed to benefit the Community House. For more information, please contact Executive Director Patty Stevens or Development Director Chris Carroll at (203) 934-5221.