

*Be a Power of One.
Help us to make our
community stronger,
one by one.*

Volunteer
Donate
Participate
Chaperone
Contribute
Receive

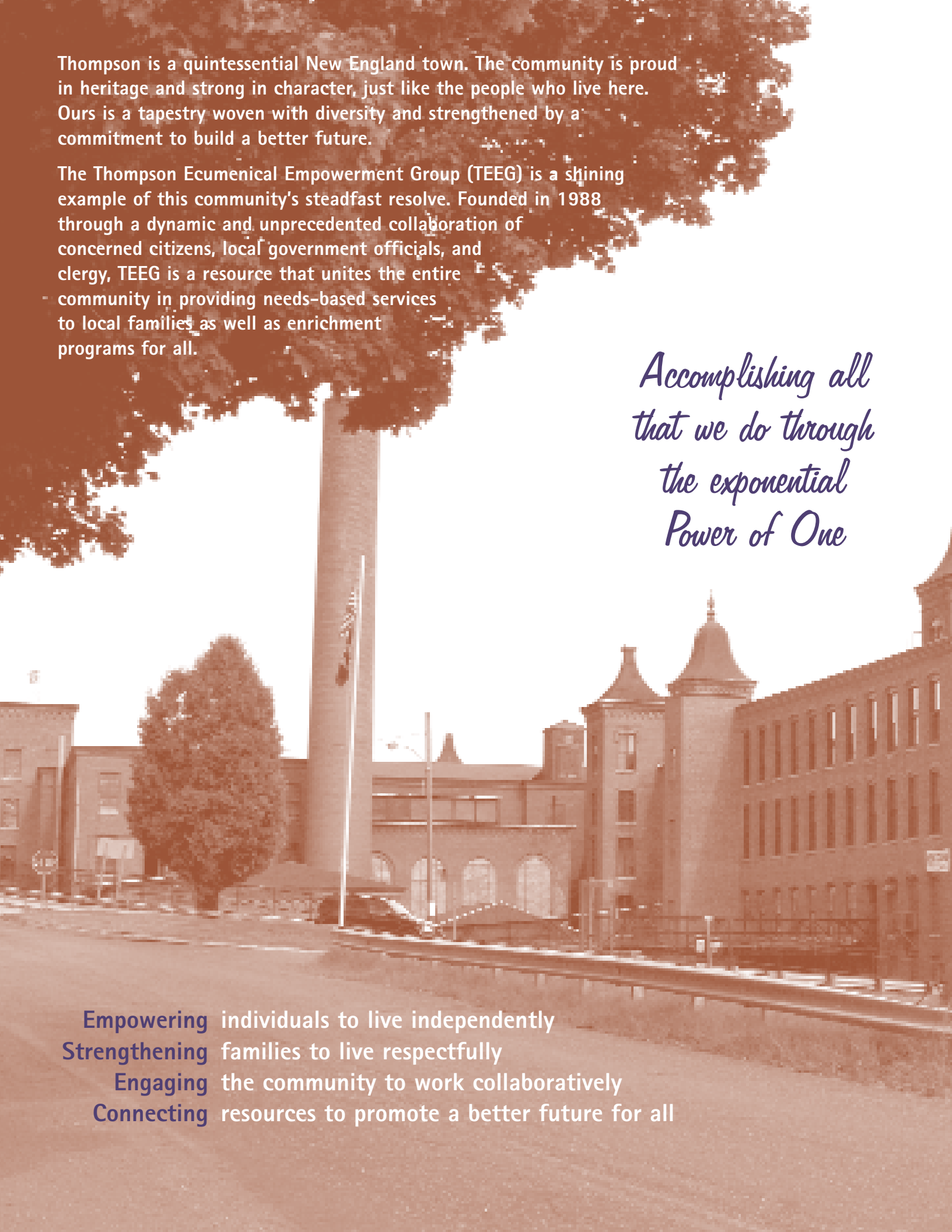


Thompson Ecumenical Empowerment Group, Inc.
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The Power of One

Making the Community Stronger One by One





Thompson is a quintessential New England town. The community is proud in heritage and strong in character, just like the people who live here. Ours is a tapestry woven with diversity and strengthened by a commitment to build a better future.

The Thompson Ecumenical Empowerment Group (TEEG) is a shining example of this community's steadfast resolve. Founded in 1988 through a dynamic and unprecedented collaboration of concerned citizens, local government officials, and clergy, TEEG is a resource that unites the entire community in providing needs-based services to local families as well as enrichment programs for all.

*Accomplishing all
that we do through
the exponential
Power of One*

Empowering individuals to live independently
Strengthening families to live respectfully
Engaging the community to work collaboratively
Connecting resources to promote a better future for all

Donors - Individuals

TEEG Donors – Individuals

Pam Adamuska
Joseph & Claire Adiletta
Klaus & Elizabeth Amburn
Carl E. & KiKu Anderson
Katherine Anderson
Megan Anderson
Crystal Anson
Lisa & Scott Antonson
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Patricia & Kirby Cuhna
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Jenni Fountain
Andrew Franklin
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Seth Frink
Dale & Susan Gardner
Michael Gardner
BettJean Gay
Marion Gebhardt
Frances Gesualdi
Zachary & Barbara Gianaris
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Deirdre Hey
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Eleanor Hinds
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Dr. Neri Holzer
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Linda Johnson & Edward Rose, Jr.
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Tara Kelly
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Robert & Pauline LaChance
Pauline & Francis LaFramboise
Paul Lajoie
Raymond Lamiotte
Armond LaMontagne
Barbara Lamothe
George & Grace Landry

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Lucille Langlois
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Peter Lopriore
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Stephanie Lunt
Dr. Roland & Wendy Lupien
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William McEvily
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Josh Mooney
Eric Moore
Fredric & Ethelinda Montfort
Chris Morency
Rene & Lynne Morin
Keith & Margery Mosher
Robert & Barbara Mulligan
Kathleen Murphy
Jim & Anna Naum
Debra Neundorf
Rex & Theresa Nichols
Maureen Ritchie Nicholson
William Nizamoff
Tim & Lynne O'Brien
Ernest & Norma O'Leary
Cathy O'Rourke
Agnes & James Oleksiak
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Merrill & Jane Robbins
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Donna Williams
Sen. Don & Laura Williams
Felicia & Vernon Wilson
Frederick & Aileen Witkowski
William & Susan Witkowski
Frederick and Rachel Wojick
Henry Woodbridge, Jr.
Alan & Kellie Woodis
Irving Woodworth

Donors - Businesses & Organizations



Support for TEEG programming comes from far and wide. We want to thank all of the local businesses, organizations and individuals who have generously cared

enough to reach beyond themselves in support of the greater community. This year, we would like to thank Rene and Lynne Morin for serving as the honorary chairpersons for the TEEG 2004-2005 Angel Campaign.

"It is with great pleasure that we serve as this year's honorary chairpersons for the TEEG 8th Annual Angel Campaign. As longtime Thompson residents and active community members, we have seen TEEG grow over the last 16 years. We have watched as they have stretched from serving the needs of the Three Rows neighborhood to becoming a vital resource to our entire town. Your contributions make all that TEEG does for our community possible. Thank you for your past support and future consideration."

Rene and Lynne Morin
Honorary Co-Chairpersons
TEEG 2004-2005 Angel Campaign

TEEG Donors – Businesses & Organizations

A Second Look
A-1 Septic Service
Acropolis Pizza & Restaurant
Acts II Ministries, Inc.
Adesso
Advanced Aesthetics
American Rent-All, LLC
Archambault Insurance Associates
Area Agency on Aging Eastern CT area
Attorney Thomas A. Borner
Austin's Sea Food
Balfour Farms
Bardell's Decorating
BARR, Inc.
Barrette's LLC
BCS Company
Beit Bros IGA
Benson & Larkin Unique & Fine Properties
Bill's Bread and Breakfast
Blackmer Farm
Boland, St. Onge & Brouillard
Book Lovers Gourmet
Bradley Playhouse
Brighter Skies Balloon Co.
Bruce Thomas, LMT
Building Blocks Childcare
Buster's Rivers Edge
Busy Bee's Indoor Playground
C. Goodrich Alarm Company
Cable Works
Carey Consulting
Carvel Ice Cream Bakery
Celebrations Overnight Stay
Chace Building Supply of CT, Inc.
Charter Communications employees
Chase Road Growers

Christ Church of Pomfret
Church of the Good Shepherd
Church's Custom Heating, Inc.
Cider Rides
Citizens National Bank
Clubhouse Fitness
Colonial Restaurant
Congregational Church of Putnam
Congregational Church of Thompson, Inc.
Connecticut Food Bank
Cortis Bed and Breakfast
Country Kitchens
Crabtree & Evelyn
Craft Menagerie
CT Audubon
Curves, North Woodstock
Curves, Thompson
Cub Scout pack #66
D & P Water Systems
Dancer's Depot
Daniel Trowbridge House B & B
Danielson Book Store
Danielson Surplus Sales, Inc.
Day Kimball Homecare
Day Kimball Hospital employees
DEKCO, Inc.
DMB Design The Flowers Bed
Diamond A Ranch
Drake Petroleum Company
Dumas' Decorating Center
Electric Boat employees
Empire Travel
End Hunger Now
Finders Keepers
First Congregational Church of Woodstock
Flowering Vine
Foldes Keep Art
Food N'Fudge Gourmet Shop
Four Corners Restaurant & Pub

Franklin Pharmacy
Freeman Sales & Service, Inc.
Friendly Market & Deli
Friendship Valley Bed & Breakfast Inn
Frito Lay, Inc.
G-7 Caterers
Gene's Furniture Loft
Gilman & Valade Funeral Home
Gladys Green & Pineview Courts
Higgins & Sons
Hilltop Ceramics
Home Depot
Hometown Heating
Hometown Properties
Hopkins Wood N'Crafts
Inner Motion LLC
Jason's Restaurant
JD Coopers
Jessica Tuesday's Deli
Jim & Anna Naum
Jim's Pizza
John J. Mooney, D.M.D.
Johnson Corrugated Products
K & R Automotive, Inc.
Kelly's Tire
Kerrin Graphics & Printing, Inc.
King Oldsmobile
Kingsbury Excavating & Septic
L. Wagner & Associates
Labonte & Mercik
LaDonna's Family Hair Studio
Laframboise Well Drilling, Inc.
Lake Road Generating Company
Landry's Flooring
Landry's Sun Run
Laurel House Restaurant
LB's Family Restaurant, Inc.
Litha Hill Herbs and Floral
Loadrunners
Lord Thompson Manor
Mary R. Fisher Elementary School
Meadow View Art & Framing
Midas Auto Service Experts
Midtown Fitness
Mrs. Bridge's Pantry
Network, Inc.
New Roxbury Liquors
Nikki's Dog House
North Grosvenordale Methodist Church
Northeast CT Relay for Life
Northeast Investments
Northeast Utilities System
Northeastern CT Chapter of Thrivent
Financial for Lutherans
Norwich Navigators
NUMA Drilling
Old Sturbridge Village
PS Irrigation, LLC
Pasteles
Penelope Farm
Performing Arts Opera New England
Planned Parenthood of Danielson
Planned Parenthood of Willimantic
Plastics Color & Compounding Inc.
Platt Associates Real Estate
Pomfret Spirit Shop & Wine Shed
Putnam Aquarium
Putnam Car Wash
Putnam Cardiology Assoc., P. C.
Putnam Farmers Co-Op
Putnam Rotary Club #6507
Putnam Rotary Club #1382
Putnam Savings Bank
Pyzzz
Quinn & Company, LLC

Raceway Golf Club
Rainbow Furniture
Sam Wibberley Tire
Scott Levine
Shaw, Inc.
Shear Perfection
Silver Bike Shop Co.
SNET Community Connections
SNET/SBC
Snuffy's Package Store
Someplace Special
STAT Uniform Shop
Steven Linen Association Inc.
St. Joseph's Rectory
St. Mary's Church
St. Philip's Episcopal Church
Stop & Shop
Strycker Lange Co.
Sunrise Trading
Sunshine Shop
Super Winch
Thai Cuisine
The Calli Image Company
The Craft Menagerie
The Gathering Basket
The Harvest
The Inn At Woodstock Hill
The Pickled Pepper
The Scrapbook Shoppe
The Thompson Flower Shoppe
The Vanilla Bean Café
The Vine Bistro
Thompson Auto Care LLC
Thompson Library
Thompson Lions Club
Thompson Medical Center
Thompson Middle School
Thompson Speedway
Thompson Thimble Club
Thornfield Hall
Tourtelotte Memorial High School
Town of Glocester
Town of Thompson
Town of Thompson Selectman's Office
Town of Thompson Tax Collector's Office
Toys for Tots
Trink-et Shoppe, Inc.
Tuffets Quilt Shop
Turning Point
Under God's Wings
United Natural Foods
United Services
United Services Domestic Violence
Program - Ed Koistinen
United States Post Office -
North Grosvenordale
Valley Springs Sportsman Center
Village Hardware
Village Restaurant & Lounge
Vineyard Valley Golf Club
Wags and Whiskers
Walmart - Michael Douglas
Webco
Webster Five Cents Savings Bank
WECONNECT - Mary Oliver
Wellington Curtain
Westbank
Westfield Manor
Windy Acres
WINY Osbrey Broadcasting Company
Wizard Candles, Inc.
Woodstock Garden Club
Woodstock Studio
Zip's Diner

Never underestimate the power of one person, one family, one community to make a difference.

No matter how old or how young, each one of us has within ourselves the potential to make a difference. At TEEG, we help people reach their potential to improve their lives and the lives of those around them.

Everyday, we are reminded of the Power of One. We see it in simple acts of kindness and selfless dedication. We feel it in the boundless generosity of countless contributions of time and money. We are touched by it through the heartfelt gratitude of recipients.

The unfailing dedication, commitment, generosity and strength of individuals to help themselves and their neighbors both inspires us and enables us to do what we do. Though we offer a finite number of programs, we have been able to reach out to literally thousands of people in our community through the exponential effect of the Power of One.

This year's annual report pays tribute to six individuals who represent that power. With a selfless commitment and motivation to improve their lives and the lives of those around them, each of these individuals is the living essence of what TEEG is all about.

TEEG Programs x [(Caring People) + (Program Dollars)] = Lives Touched

Needs-Based	Emergent Food Distribution	147
	Monthly Commodity Distribution	705
	Holiday Giving (Thanksgiving, Christmas & Easter)	1,414
	Back to School Campaign	72
	Operation Fuel	396
	Salvation Army	56
	Camperships	21
Community	Thompson Together	447
	Anger Aside	33
	ARCHES	35
	People Empowering People (PEP)	11
	Discovery for Birth to Eight Success	37
Youth	Juvenile Review Board	10
	Community Service / Volunteer Opportunities	43
	Intergeneration Activities	350
Parents	Parent Aide	63
	Parent Support Groups	56
Families	Parent/Child Play Groups	75
	Parent as Teachers	24
	Food Preservation Classes	8
	Community Garden	80
	Across the Smiles Mobile Dental Health	21
Seniors	Bi-weekly Distribution of Surplus Food Items	140
	Senior Luncheon Programs	40
	Senior Assistance Services / Case Management	141
	Senior Recreation	35
Total	Total Number of Individuals Served by TEEG	4,453

Message from the Director



It is with a deep sense of pride and a touch of sorrow that I reflect on the past year. When this fiscal year began, TEEG was in a process of adjustment.

With limited resources, we thoughtfully realigned our

programming to reflect the agency's priorities. We looked hard at where our services were being delivered, where we were most needed, and where we could be most effective.

Each program area was examined. Food security and parent education continued to be important priorities for our agency. Our recent involvement with area seniors had uncovered a need in the community that TEEG is uniquely suited to meet. Community engagement is the cornerstone that the agency was built on and continues to be the area through which we can make the most significant contributions to the Thompson community as a whole. In the area of youth service, it was decided that TEEG could be most effective by collaborating with existing recreation and school programs, rather than providing direct service.

Collaboration is what makes it possible for us to continue delivering services to people in need. This year, our food pantry was well stocked at a time when many community food programs were not due the generosity of this amazing community. The three schools that comprise the Thompson Public School District outdid themselves in collecting food for local families. By November, Operation Fuel was in full swing, serving more families and seniors than ever before. In February, we held our largest Have a Heart event ever and closed our annual campaign with over \$45,000 of local giving!

And then it happened. On March 20, our TEEG family and the Thompson community was dealt a tragic blow. Community Services Coordinator, Karen Daley, very suddenly passed away. Karen was a vital member of our staff and a treasured friend to many. She left three young children, Ashley, Norman and Douglas, and a heartbroken team of colleagues and friends.

For those of you who know us, you know that TEEG is a unique organization. We are not unique because of what we do, but rather because of who we are. We are able to accomplish all that we do with a very small but rather because volunteers who give time, money and heart to get things done. With Karen's passing, we needed you more than ever before, and you were there. Because of your generosity, TEEG carried on.

This fiscal year has come to a close in bittersweet reflection. We served a record number of people. Our fund raising and grant writing efforts were more fruitful than ever before. Through the dedication of our State Representative, Shawn Johnston, we were able to secure new state funding that allowed us to complete many long overdue building updates. We have strengthened our role as a vital town service and a resource in local, regional and state collaborations.

Through all that has happened in the past year, we have come to recognize more than ever the Power of One – one person like Karen to touch so many. We know the Power of one community to unite in times of need. Our mission has been met through the Power of One – one person, one family, one neighborhood...one employee, one agency, one community at a time.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Donna M. Grant".

Donna M. Grant
Executive Director

TEEG Staff



Donna Grant
Executive Director

Jenni Fountain
Office/Personnel Manager
Grants Coordinator

Stephanie Lunt
Director, Family Services

Stacy Johnson
Director, Community Services

Tanya Rzeznikiewicz
Early Education Coordinator

Kelly Ignasiak
Executive Assistant

The Exponential Effect of the Power of One

Volunteers are the heart and soul of any community. Nowhere is their value more apparent than at TEEG.

Our agency was born through the spirit of volunteerism. We continue to serve thousands more than our staff could ever reach because of the countless volunteers who are always stepping up to lend a hand. TEEG has been blessed with caring, generous individuals from Thompson and beyond who give freely of their time and talents to help us meet our mission. They come to distribute food to those less fortunate, prepare a holiday meal, mow a lawn, weed a garden, answer our phones, or file stacks of paperwork.

We couldn't do it without you!

Martha Adams	Helen Fontaine	Micheal Joyce	Rachael Pinto
Jane Austin	Gary Fountain	Dick Kachuck	Philip Pollier
Norman Babbitt	Joyce Fountain	Dave Kimball	Tina Porter
Margaret Babbitt	Joe Fountain	Kathy Kimball	Barbara Ratcliffe
Rita Barthelet	Tina Fountain	John Knight	Mercedes Robbins
Lisa Becker	Amanda Furland	Al Landry	Claire Rocheleau
Brenda Bennett	Lisa Garrity	Lynn Landry	Susan Rogers
Diane Bennett	Barbara Girard	Lucille Langlois	Rachel Sikora
Dorothy Bergeron	Barbara Goloski	Arthur Lewis	Marica Tripp
Delores Blain	Branden Grant	Donna Lynch	Robert Tripp, Sr.
Maurice Blain	Gabe Grant	James Mack	Robert Tripp, Jr.
Violet Bourdeau	Shelby Grant	Alexander Mahendran, M.D.	Tim Tripp
Alison Boutaugh	Stewart Grant	Dushy Mahendran	Alicia Tucker
Peggy Burton	David Grassini	Miah Manning	Frederick Tucker
Kit Carpenter	David Green	John Marini	Levi Tucker
Nicholas Cashdollar	Joel Griffith	Paul Mayo	Brenda Verdone
Bev Daniels	Erica Groh	Barbara McGarry	Juan Welch
Florence Davis	Ashley Henry	Caitlin Monahan	Amy Wood
Matilda Deotte	Douglas Henry	Cindylee Myers	Alternative Incarceration Center (AIC)
Linda Desautels	Norman Henry	Anna Naum	Network, Inc.
Frank Desautels	Kelly Ignasiak	James Naum	Special thanks go to: MAD Communications, Pelton Graphics and Laura Musumeci-Photographer for donating their time and creative talents to develop our 2003-2004 Annual Report.
Loretta Dickerson	Richard Jacobson	Robert Pasay	
Brianna Eames	Dorothy Jarvis	George Pepin	
Bernard Ferland	George Jewell	Barbara Pickett	



Sound fiscal management and pennies from heaven have been the cornerstones of TEEG's financial practice. We find ways of stretching every dollar we are given as far as they will go, and then we pray. This year our prayers were answered, over and over again.

Our Angel Campaign and Have a Heart event generated almost \$45,000 of local giving. Community partners, civic organizations and the Town of Thompson all came to our aid at the onset of the fiscal year, at a time when we did not anticipate enough funding from traditional grants to keep our programming in place. Our legislators also helped to answer our prayers by believing in the value of the service we deliver. With their help, we were able to secure additional state grants. To round out our coffers, private foundations also found us worthy of significantly more funding than we had been awarded in years past.

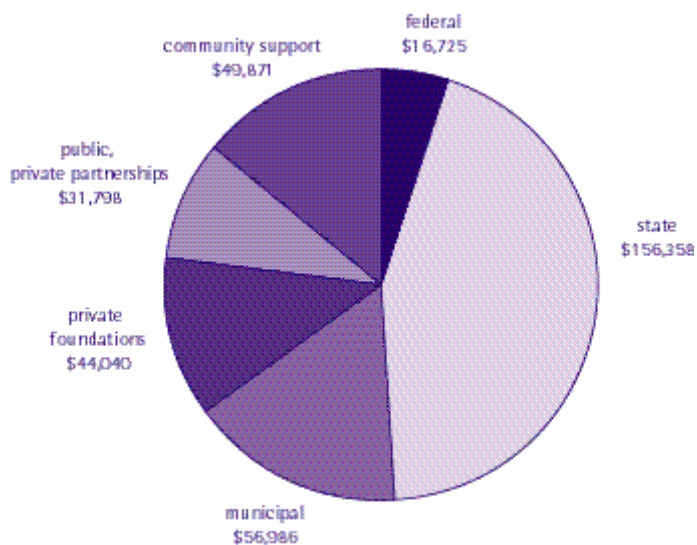
In the end, we were able to realize just a few more dollars in revenue than we had to expend. And, through sound fiscal planning we were able to make a small contribution to the fund balance to help ensure TEEG's ability to continue to meet the needs of our community, rain or shine.

Source of Funding

- Federal
 - Senior Resources Agency on Aging
 - National Office of Rural Health
- State
 - Department of Social Services
 - Department of Children and Families
 - Office of Policy and Management
- Municipal
 - Town of Thompson
 - Thompson Public Schools
- Private Foundations
 - William Casper Graustein Memorial Fund
 - CL&P
 - Local Prevention Council
 - Parent Trust Fund
 - Episcopal Bishop's Fund
- Public/Private
 - Operation Fuel
- Community Support
 - Corporate Donors
 - Business Partners
 - Individual Contributions
 - "Be an Angel" Campaign
 - "Have a Heart" Fundraising Event

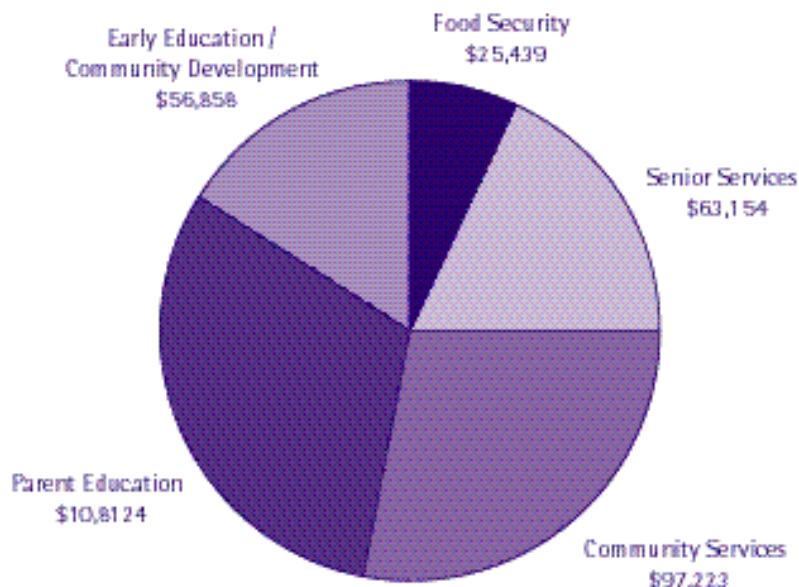
TEEG Income 2003-2004

Total = \$355,778



TEEG Expenditures 2003-2004

Total = \$350,798



Message from the Board President



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

I wish to thank the past president, Margaret Babbitt, for her remarkable and successful stewardship during her tenure. My first year in this capacity, has been very rewarding. This was also a very poignant year with the passing of a cherished member of the staff, Karen Daley. Karen related to the young and old alike. She helped many to achieve the impossible.

The mission of TEEG from its inception was "empowering individuals and families to reach their highest independent living level". Over the years, TEEG has grown in many ways while not losing sight of its original goal. Our programs have expanded to reach deeper into the community with the continued focus on children, families, youth and seniors. We are providing successful early intervention with the goal of preventing crisis situations that could have long-term impact to the individuals and community at large. Some of our new collaborations include ARCHES, a support group for parents with children with special needs, and assistance in the development of Regional School Readiness Council. These efforts will help many more children to achieve academically and thus prepare them for life-long success.

TEEG continues to play a vital role in promoting and supporting programs that serve the entire community. The Thompson Youth Center and Thompson Together are two such initiatives of which we are especially proud. The Youth Center fulfills a significant need for afterschool programming, while Thompson Together has established a town web site, conducted town-wide cleanup

efforts that included the French River, and sponsored a Resident's Art Show. The Early Education sub-committee has completed the Thompson Resource Directory.

During the first six months of this fiscal year, our agency was adversely effected by cuts in state funding. We made the required adjustments in order to continue to function in a fiscally responsible manner, maximizing every dollar provided to us. The second half of the year bore the fruits of our partnership efforts within the local community, foundations and the State of Connecticut. We received more contributions and funding than we initially anticipated, which allowed us to strengthen our programs further.

I want to thank you for your continued and generous support, both in the form of financial contributions and volunteer service. I also would like to thank all the private foundations for their continued trust and financial support given to this one agency that has make such a difference in one community.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dushy Mahendran".

Dushy Mahendran
President

TEEG Board of Directors

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Dushy Mahendran, <i>President</i> | Donna Lynch |
| Jim Naum, <i>Vice President</i> | Alexander Mahendran, M.D. |
| Mercedes Robbins, <i>Treasurer</i> | Barbara McGarry |
| Kathy Kimball, <i>Secretary</i> | Anna Naum |
| Jane Austin | Barbara Pickett |
| Alison Boutaugh* | Fran Roy |
| Barbara Goloski* | Robert Siminski* |
| Erica Groh* | Ada Temple |
| Dave Kimball | Brenda Verdone* |
| Lucille Langlois | |

**Not pictured*





The Power of One to Make a Difference

Karen epitomized the Power of One to Make a Difference. She was the driving force behind the creation of the Thompson Youth Center. She organized the annual TEEG Holiday Dinners and Holiday Giving projects. Her ability to mobilize resources and solicit support enabled her to provide 57 people with a full Thanksgiving Dinner with all the trimmings for only \$21.47.

No matter how old or young, Karen reached out to help those in need. She provided companionship and counsel to countless numbers of seniors in the Thompson community. She opened her home and her heart to hundreds of children, helping them to see the uniqueness and value that they each had within themselves.

As much as Karen gave, she received in the simple joy and satisfaction that comes from lending a needed hand. Yet she recognized the importance of offering help in a way that preserves a person's dignity and self-respect. She understood that how people live is as much about choice as circumstance. Most significantly, Karen helped to educate the community that even those living in financial poverty have much to give.

Karen was much more than an employee at TEEG. She was part of our family. She helped to weave the fabric of who we are. And though she is no longer here, she will always be a part of us.

“It’s all good.”

These were words that Karen Daley spoke often.

It's not always easy to find the bright side in every situation. For Karen, it was a gift and she shared it generously with everyone around her. As the Community Services Coordinator at TEEG, her optimism spread hope and encouragement everywhere she went.

Unlike many Thompson residents, Karen was not born here. Rather, she came to the Village of Three Rows seeking refuge from the city violence in Hartford and longing for the sense of place that can only be found in tight-knit communities like ours. Once she arrived with her family, Karen worked tirelessly to strengthen the bonds of family and build community.





The Power of One to Be Confident

*“My name is
Dani Lyn Collins.”*

It takes a lot of courage to look someone in the eye and confidently proclaim who we are.

For most of us, it comes naturally. But for some, it's a skill that has to be learned.

When Dani Collins was two and a half years old, her mother knew that Dani's intense shyness went beyond the typical games of children. Karen Collins knew her daughter needed help. But for Karen, and many families like hers, limited resources meant limited options. Then Karen heard about TEEG.

Karen began taking Dani to the TEEG Parent/Child Playgroup and also enrolled in Parents as Teachers, a home-based parenting program. With TEEG's Early Childhood educator, Karen began to help Dani face her fears.

In the beginning, Dani found it nearly impossible to interact with other children. She couldn't introduce herself to the instructor.

When other children toppled the toy boxes and scattered the contents, Dani cried because, "It's all messy." But with the Power of One to Be Confident, that would all soon change.

Working with Dani in the safety of her own home, TEEG's Early Childhood educator taught Karen strategies to help her daughter accept normal disarray. She made messes with Dani and showed her that it was OK. Soon, Dani came to playgroup as a more confident little girl.

At the time, Karen had no idea that the skills she was teaching Dani would also prepare her to deal with personal tragedy. Very unexpectedly, Dani's daddy became ill with leukemia and died. Karen was extremely worried about how Dani would respond to her father's death. But through her newfound confidence, Dani has learned acceptance. She comforts her mother by saying, "Daddy's the moon and he's looking down at me."

Through Thompson's new school readiness program, Dani is now enrolled in preschool. She is excited about learning and eager to meet new people. For Dani, every day has become a new adventure and she's ready to meet the world head on.

“There was no way that Dani would have been ready for school without TEEG.”





The Power of One to Build Community

Dedication to community service is a trait that can often be traced through family trees. In Thompson, the Robbins' family heritage dates back over 200 years. Their long tradition of public service has passed down through the generations and lives on today, especially in their matriarch, Mercedes.

A quiet and unsung hero, Merc has dedicated her life to public service. For 16 years she served as our town's treasurer. She continues to serve on numerous local boards and organizations including TEEG, St. Joseph's Church and the Friends of the Library. She is the treasurer for the East Thompson Cemetery and volunteers at the St. Joseph's thrift store. She brings a respected opinion and a sense of history as a member of the current school building committee.

Merc does it all because she believes in the Power of One to Build Community.

Everyone in the Robbins' family shares in the tradition of community service. Merc's late husband, Robert (Swisher), served as Judge of Probate in Thompson for 25 years. He also chaired the Board of Education for 12 years. Her son followed in his dad's footsteps, serving a term of 12 years as well. Merc's daughter-in-law now holds her own place on the Board. And her daughter and son-in-law can be seen volunteering throughout their own church and school communities.

Small towns depend on the selfless dedication of volunteers like Merc and her family. Our communities simply could not operate without them. They work tirelessly behind the scenes offering support, motivation and inspiration. They keep a low profile but have a profound impact on all that gets done.

At TEEG, we know first hand the value of a quiet, constant force like Merc. During her six years on our Board, she has served as our Treasurer and volunteered one day each week to administer our Operation Fuel program, which has grown to serve many more individuals than we ever thought possible.

Merc understands the value of community service. She knows that the real work gets done one by one, at the grassroots level where people live. That is why she is such a vital part of TEEG, a community service agency who understands the Power of One.



“Thompson is great place to live. I am proud to be on the TEEG Board of Directors as a way to help others in our community.”



The Power of One to Believe in a Better Future

Our ability to envision the future is to a large extent determined by our exposure to experiences in the past. This is why it is so vitally important that children be provided with the opportunity to see and participate in the world around us. Unfortunately, too many families lack the means to afford their children the chance to engage in new experiences.

Robbie Tripp moved to the Village of Three Rows with his family when he was 10 years old. That was in 1997. Since then, the Tripp family has both received from and given back to TEEG. A give-and-take relationship, Robbie's parents helped in the food pantry and community garden while TEEG provided Robbie with opportunities he otherwise would not have had.

Summer camp and field trips allowed Robbie to see new things and meet new people. One year at 4-H camp, he won the award for camp spirit, an accomplishment that still fills him with a sense of pride. The Teen Center provided Robbie with a sense of place and belonging where he could interact with kids his own age.

When it came time for Robbie to enter high school, he applied at Ellis Tech. Because he didn't have strong interview skills, his application was turned down. Believing in Robbie's potential, TEEG appealed to the school to give him a second chance. After a coaching session on how to present himself, Robbie was accepted. He worked hard and dedicated himself to being among the best in the auto body class. With the Power of One to Believe in a Better Future, Robbie is now a senior and will graduate in May 2005 with the skills to start his new career.

Through all the experiences he gained with TEEG, what Robbie remembers most is the lessons he's learned. "TEEG taught me that there's always another way to look at things. If you put yourself in someone else's shoes, you see the world from a different perspective. No matter how bad you think you have it, someone else has it worse."

The lesson Robbie took most to heart is that more than anything else, be proud of who you are.

*"TEEG has
been a
second
chance
for me."*





The Power of One to Get Things Done

Everyday, we each see things in our community that need to be done. A public building that needs painting. A community project that needs an extra hand. An event that needs organizing. And while we all recognize the value of such things, few of us actually dedicate the time to make them happen. It takes a special person to stop and say, "I'll help."

Thankfully for the Thompson community, Norman Babbitt is one such person.

Norman grew up in Thompson. From his earliest days, he has always dedicated his time to community service. As a youngster, he visited his neighborhood of Swede Village to offer help and companionship to the seniors. As a young man he served our country in the military. And as an adult he was a teacher in the New Haven public school system.

Norman was introduced to TEEG in 1995 when his sister-in-law, Peg Babbitt, former TEEG president, enlisted his help to serve Thanksgiving Dinner to Thompson families. It was such a gratifying experience that Norman continued to visit TEEG and volunteer his time on the weekends offering to do whatever needed to be done. From single-handedly painting the outside of the TEEG building to delivering food to helping to put us in touch with the right people to secure needed funding, Norman has done it all.

For Norman, volunteering his time is a way of life. Beyond his work with TEEG, he has dedicated countless hours to the Thompson VFW, Masonic Lodge, Quiet Corner Self-Help for the Hard of Hearing, and various senior groups throughout the region. The reason Norman keeps doing all that he does for our community is the tremendous gratification that comes from the Power of One to Get Things Done.

At TEEG, we are forever grateful to Norman and all of our volunteers. We couldn't do all that we do without you.

*“If a person
wants to get
involved with
an organization
that gets things
done, TEEG is
the one.”*





The Power of One to Live Independently

We are an aging society. This reality has brought with it many challenges for communities and families alike. But with each challenge comes the opportunity to reaffirm our social values. Seniors are one of our community's most treasured assets. By recognizing the contributions they make and providing them with the support to live independently, we strengthen the social fabric of our community as a whole.

Florence Davis has been a contributing member of the Thompson community for nearly 40 years. She first lived in the Village of Three Rows with her family. Once her children had grown, she moved down south for a period but returned "home" to Thompson in 1998. Today, she lives in the Pineview Courts senior housing complex, where she offers support and friendship to other seniors.

With a heart bigger than she is, Flo welcomes new neighbors into her community. She makes the rounds with her faithful companion, Mama, to be sure that everyone has what they need. If they don't, she's the first to offer food from her own shelves and refer people to contact TEEG.

Recognizing that the Power of One to Live Independently does not mean living alone, Flo welcomes the assistance that TEEG is able to provide. She looks forward to the once-a-month visits to help pay bills and keep her affairs in order. The intergenerational programs encourage young people to mix and mingle with Thompson's seniors. The Holiday Dinners and gifts offer a sense of tradition and family that is especially appreciated.

While Flo can't do as much volunteer work as she once did, she remains tireless in her desire to help. Instead of packing bags at the food pantry, now she bakes cakes for fundraisers and encourages her neighbors to do the same.

For Flo, the sense of purpose that comes from helping others allows her to graciously accept help in return.

"Having TEEG here helps me to be able to live on my own."

