

Letter from the Editor



Photograph: John Ellis

Communities & Banking magazine focuses on lower-income communities and people in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut.

One topic that always interests us is the way community banks help build the economic strength of these lower-income communities—for example, through loans to small businesses or through philanthropy.

In “How Smaller Banks Work with Local Nonprofits,” Claire Greene talks to bankers about their philanthropic strategies and how nonprofits could improve the pitches they make for support. Many small banks, writes Greene, want to know how many people are likely to benefit from an initiative and what the nonprofit’s track record has been. Banks also encourage nonprofits to ask for volunteer help as well as money because many bank employees enjoy using their technical and financial skills *pro bono*.

Our summer issue also circles back on some ongoing C&B themes. Delia Sawhney talks about a possible avenue for improving elementary school outcomes using classrooms that comprise two grade levels. At the other end of the educational spectrum, Jerry Rubin of Jewish Vocational Service discusses the mismatch between current worker skills and high-demand skills. He recommends greater integration of postsecondary training with community colleges.

One intriguing story from Connecticut describes a low-income housing facility for older veterans needing assisted living but not a nursing home. The key, we learn, is to have state assistance follow the individual “to the level of care appropriate for his or her needs.” Another Connecticut article maintains that tackling the barriers to good health is an important way to help poor families be healthy.

You will note that we also revisit the topic of prisoners. That is because many low-level, nonviolent offenders are poor, and when they come back to their communities, they are still poor, only now they have a record that can keep them from a legitimate job, and that affects the communities we care about. We asked one author to describe how entrepreneurship can work for some ex-offenders. And because a poor education may perpetuate poverty and crime, we turned to Vermont’s Children’s Literacy Foundation to learn about the benefits of helping children of prisoners begin to break that cycle.

Please send us your feedback, pro and con, and your ideas for articles, especially if we have shortchanged your state lately. When we receive letters, we print them.

Be in touch,

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