

*It took 27 years, but all of eastern Connecticut was united under a single Community Foundation in 2010. Alice Fitzpatrick and Rheo Brouillard, the respective presidents, never wavered in their beliefs that it was the right decision.*

*The merger of two great community foundations*

## **Bringing eastern Connecticut together**

**F**or all their fierce individuality, the different “villages” throughout eastern Connecticut relied on one another for hundreds of years. Early Native Americans crossed the state from end to end; farmers, textile manufacturers, and sailors cooperated in trade.

In 2010, the same finally became true for charitable giving in eastern Connecticut. Alice Fitzpatrick and Rheo Brouillard brought together the Community Foundation of Southeastern Connecticut and the TriCounty Area Community Foundation, respectively, to form the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut. The merged entity represents one fourth of the state’s cities and towns.

“There were skeptics and naysayers in both camps,” points out one observer. “The two community foundations had different histories, unequal assets, and different approaches. Meetings went on for months and months.

“Yet every day, Alice became more convinced the merger was the best answer for charitable people living in eastern Connecticut.”

“Rheo and his board had built up an excellent reserve of goodwill and trust,” Fitzpatrick explains. “TriCounty had also established two respected Women & Girls funds. They knew nonprofits from Norwich to Woodstock.

“For our part, the Community Foundation of Southeastern Connecticut brought a very seasoned staff, not to mention an impressive track record in designing programs, making grants, managing a significant portfolio, and providing donor service.

“I never doubted that we could do something ‘magic’ as one community foundation,” Fitzpatrick says.

“And we are!”

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