

Charity begins in MetroWest

More than two dozen groups relating to the arts, family support or the environment got good news this week, just in time for the holiday season. The Natick-based nonprofit Foundation for MetroWest — formerly the Crossroads Foundation — announced grants being awarded with a total of more than \$100,000.

Most of the grants from this regional charity are small — \$2,500 to the Danforth Museum of Art, for example, and \$5,000 to Employment Options of Marlborough, a group that helps people recovering from mental illness or trying to rise out of poverty to develop work skills and find meaningful employment.

These local organizations aren't like high-profile arts groups in greater Boston — the Boston Symphony, Museum of Fine Arts and Boston Ballet come to mind — that have gained the steady support of many of the Hub's largest philanthropies.

Seven-figure donation checks don't roll in to places like the Hudson Area Arts Alliance, (recipient of a \$4,000 grant from the Foundation for MetroWest) and Framingham Court Mediation Services (\$2,000 from the foundation). But the smaller checks, invested locally in worthy causes, carry meaning and allow these groups to get real work done, whether it's helping rebuild the life of a person working to break free of mental illness, or providing the seed money for the Commonwealth Ballet in Acton to run a dance workshop or produce special performances for area students next year.

The MetroWest Health Care Foundation was another benefactor that weighed in this year with substantial help for 16 organizations in our region. This foundation awarded \$670,000 in grants to a variety of worthy groups. Natick Visiting Nurse Association got a major boost with a \$280,000 Health Care Foundation grant, while the Franklin Food Pantry received \$9,900 in funding to help keep up with the demand the weak economy placed on families running short of food.

This is a time of year when we tend to be in more of a giving mood, but it's groups such as the Foundation for MetroWest and MetroWest Health Care Foundation that



provide important underpinnings to human services, arts organizations and health care efforts to keep them operating in all seasons.

For more information, visit www.foundation-formetrowest.org and www.mchcf.org.