



Community Driven... Community Strong

www.bcacinc.org

March 12, 2015

Town of Egremont
Mary Brazie
PO Box 368
Egremont, MA 01258-0368

Re: Fund appropriation

Dear Ms. Brazie,

I recently received your letter regarding the FY 2015 appropriation of \$1,000 from the Town of Egremont. We have not received these funds, so I respectfully request the funds. BCAC would also appreciate a similar allocation for FY 2016 if the Town has the funds available.

The primary goal of BCAC is to address the needs of the low income population in Berkshire County and assist those who find themselves in financial crisis. Our largest program that achieves this is the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Currently, there are 33 households in Egremont receiving assistance through this program. As you may be aware, BCAC is limited by the federal funding received for the LIHEAP program in regards to the amount of benefit each participant can receive. Many participants run out of benefits very quickly in the heating season and the only way we can continue to help them is through donations such as yours.

We appreciate the Town's continued support. Without partnerships such as yours, we would not be able to continue to assist those in need.

Please do not hesitate to contact me. I am new to the Organization and until mid-April, I am only in the office on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. However, I have access to emails at all times. You can reach me directly at (413) 418-3652 or at lbisbee@bcacinc.org.

On behalf of myself, BCAC staff and clients, thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Lisa A. Bisbee
Chief Financial Officer



BERKSHIRE SOUTH REGIONAL COMMUNITY CENTER

March 12, 2015

Mary Brazie
Town of Egremont
PO Box 368
Egremont, MA 01258

Dear Mary,

Thank you for the opportunity to share the benefits and needs of Berkshire South Regional Community Center and the chance to review our relationship with the Town of Egremont. The first intent of this letter is to formally request payment of \$1,500 allocated from the Town of Egremont FY 2015 to help us supplement your town's community building initiatives as well as continue to build a sense of community and common purpose for your residents and their friends through Berkshire South.

The second intent of this letter is to request a \$1,500 allocation from the Town of Egremont FY 2016 budget towards Berkshire South Regional Community Center's operating budget. This allocation will directly impact not only the residents of Egremont, but also their neighbors and community partners in the Southern Berkshires.

Berkshire South currently employs over 90 people during its busiest programming period including 5 Egremont residents. We currently serve 51 Egremont residents through memberships and program participation. In 2014 we awarded \$1,012.50 in both Financial and Program Aid to 4 households in the Town of Egremont. Our membership and fees only cover about 34% of our costs of operation and we are not subsidized by state or federal monies.

Berkshire South Regional Community Center is grateful for the continued local support of our programs and services for families and individuals in our community. The Center is unparalleled in this region as a unique resource, a fact made possible in part through the support we receive from the cities and towns we serve.

While our facility is located in Great Barrington, the Community Center's programs and services are vital to all Berkshire residents who seek warm-pool therapy for illness or disability, state-of-the-art exercise equipment, credentialed and caring instructors, a complimentary weekly dinner to enjoy with friends and neighbors, or to participate in engaging programs such as a ukulele band, 5K run/walk, or choir. All are welcome and all benefit equally from our offerings and expertise.

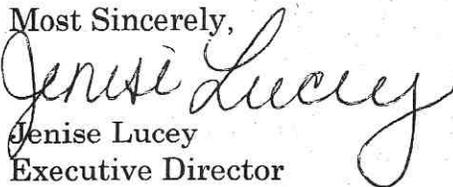
To ensure residents are aware of the many assets we bring to their communities, the Center hosts a Free Community Open House on selected Sundays each year. From January through December, towns within the region are invited to enjoy all the benefits of membership as their complimentary preview of the services we provide. Additionally, other programs, such as our Community Thanks Supper held each November welcome all that wish to attend. We are truly a regional resource for every individual and family residing in Berkshire County striving to address a wide variety of people and community needs.

Over the past several years, the Community Center has experienced a profound increase in demand for its services, as well as a surge in those seeking financial assistance to gain the benefits of our offerings. With our commitment to provide programs regardless of ability to pay, we have redoubled efforts to raise the funds required to ensure our resources remain available to every economic strata.

Thankfully, foundations and businesses answer the call to better their communities, along with many generous individuals who wish to enrich the lives of their neighbors. In addition, we depend on the support of our local cultural councils, as well as the good will of the many towns we serve. We deeply appreciate the faith our supporters place in our ability to continue meeting the health and wellness needs of Berkshire County, and remain diligent in our efforts to explore every opportunity for involvement and support to guarantee excellent community service for decades to come.

In advance, I thank you for partnering with us. We greatly appreciate your support and the powerful impact it has on families and individuals in our beautiful county.

Most Sincerely,


Jenise Lucey
Executive Director

OFFICERS

Thomas Berkel
Chair of Board

Peter Cherneff
Vice President

John Katz
Treasurer

Marcia Lawrence Soltes
Secretary

March 12, 2015

Board of Selectmen
Town of Egremont
PO Box 368
Egremont, MA 01258

Dear Selectboard:

Construct, Inc.'s vision is of a socially vibrant and economically healthy southern Berkshire community. Our mission is to provide a continuum of housing solutions and other related services to stabilize families in affordable housing which in turn strengthens the community in which we live, work and raise our children. Our work includes the towns of No. and So. Egremont.

BOARD MEMBERS

Nick Arienti

Suzanne Crerar

Shirley Friedman-Yohalem

Larry Gadd

John James

Sara Koffman

Paul Moritz

Elizabeth Rosenberg

Deborah Ryan

Annie Ryder

Charles VanAusdall

Susie Weekes

To stabilize families in housing we own and manage 70 affordable rental units, with a new 11-unit affordable housing project in the planning stages. Construct works with households to stabilize in housing with our growing workforce development program and life skills development in financial planning, tenant and first time homeownership education. We are a food stamp site, and our close collaboration with other area agencies allows our clients ready access to all community resources. We offer emergency sheltering at local motels, transitional housing for those who have become homeless, and supportive housing for those who need a little extra help to remain stable in housing.

Since July 2014, the numbers of people in need of help with rent, utilities and other emergencies has kept pace with last year. So far this year winter, we have purchased 2800 gallons of heating fuel, placed 28 people in motels for emergency stays and helped another 44 families keep a roof over their heads. Each client assisted with a direct emergency financial assistance also received an hour of financial counseling, budgeting and debt management. We have sheltered 33 single adults, and provided support services to 16 others in our supportive housing units. Lastly, we have 12 persons we work closely with to manage their financial resources in order to keep them stable in housing.



If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request a form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.

Our request for funds this year remains at \$400 to help Construct with its housing and homeless prevention programs. Thank you so much for your support.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cara Davis".

Cara Davis, Executive Director



March 13, 2015

Attn: Mary Brazie, Office Administrator
Board of Selectmen
Town of Egremont
P. O. Box 368
Egremont, MA 01258-0368

Re: Request for Payment for FY2015 and Request for FY2016 Town Appropriation of \$500

Dear Selectmen,

I am writing to request payment of the FY2015 Town of Egremont appropriation of \$500. I am also writing to ask that the Town of Egremont again support the work of Elizabeth Freeman Center by appropriating \$500 to our organization for FY2016.

We began last year facing a significant decrease in United Way funding for our core services due to a change in its priorities. We did not panic or retreat; instead, we charged forward. We maintained and strengthened our services and our collaborations. We responded to increasing calls for violence prevention education. We saved money wherever we could. We continued because of the incredible commitment of our staff, board and volunteers, the generous support of our community, including the town of Egremont.

Last year, in addition to our ongoing services:

- EFC partnered with The American Institute for Economic Research to develop a five-week financial education program specifically geared to meet the needs of victims of violence. Called "Money School", it draws on other financial literacy programs, studies about survivor needs, interviews with survivors who worked out of poverty, and feedback from survivor participants. It has a rigorous evaluation component. We are doing three separate pilot series and modifying the program based on feedback and results. Our first pilot was in Great Barrington and included an Egremont resident. We are working with a number of county banks, college educators, a matched savings fund administrator from Northampton, and a regional advisory group. This program will be replicated for use by others;
- we began working more closely with Berkshire Stonewall Coalition and Berkshire AHEC to launch an LGBTQ access project to reach and serve LGBTQ survivors, who face particular barriers to seeking help; and
- we moved our Great Barrington office from 40 Railroad Street to 401 Stockbridge Road, across from the Berkshire South Regional Community Center, Community Health Program and WIC, which both saves us money and brings us closer to key community partners.

43 Francis Avenue • Pittsfield, MA 01201 • Tel. (413) 499-2425 • 401 Stockbridge Road Suite 3 • Great Barrington, MA 01230 • Tel. 429-8190 • 85 Main Street, Suite 300 • North Adams, MA 01247 • Tel. 663-7459 • www.elizabethfreemancenter.org



Berkshire United Way Berkshire United Way Northern Berkshire United Way
Williamstown Community Chest

Our organization: Elizabeth Freeman Center (EFC) is the organization in Berkshire County responsible for providing services and leadership to address domestic violence and sexual assault in our community. We have been providing frontline emergency and ongoing support services to survivors of domestic and sexual violence and their families in Berkshire County since 1974. Our mission is to:

- help assure that all people whose lives are affected by domestic violence, sexual assault, and related crimes have access to necessary support and advocacy services to escape violence, to heal from past violence and to rebuild their lives;
- educate the public about issues of domestic violence and sexual assault and to provide information and support for the prevention of violence; and
- work for systemic change to stop the violence.

We serve the survivor, significant other, and family members who are experiencing, escaping or suffering the long-term effects of violence as well as children who have witnessed violence. Our services include:

- A 24 hour a day, seven day a week emergency response hotline with counselors available to accompany victims to hospitals, police stations and safety and emergency services such as transportation, food, phones, basic needs, and shelter;
- A confidential and secure residential shelter with in-house support services;
- Individual counseling, advocacy and safety planning at EFC sites and off site;
- Support groups;
- Legal advocacy on-site in the county courts to assist victims to obtain 209A and 258E protection orders and other necessary services;
- Community education and outreach throughout Berkshire County with special outreach in our more rural areas;
- Violence prevention education and services for our county youth;
- Specialized services for counseling and advocacy for the immigrant community;
- Supervised visitation services to ensure safe and healthy visitation between parents and children in situations where there has been family violence;
- A pet foster care program operated in conjunction with the Berkshire Humane Society, Animal Control and local veterinarians that shelters pets when their owners need to leave their homes because of family violence; and
- On-site legal advice and coordinated referrals for legal representation.

Our clients include persons from almost every city, town and hamlet in Berkshire County, including the town of Egremont.

EFC staff is located in our accessible offices in Great Barrington, North Adams and Pittsfield, the Pittsfield Police Department, the Adams Police Department, Berkshire County Kids' Place, Probate and Family Court and the District Courts in Great Barrington and North Adams. We spread ourselves throughout the county, albeit thinly, to maximize access. Our services are free and

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Berkshire United Way Berkshire United Way *Northern Berkshire United Way*
Williamstown Community Chest

confidential and available in any language. Our staff is dedicated, fearless, and diverse, with 33% identifying as persons of color, 18% Latino and 8% LGBTQT.

Need: Domestic violence is the leading cause of injury to women ages 15 to 44 and the second leading cause of death for pregnant women. Domestic violence in the home is a major indicator of child abuse. Over 1/3 of women are victims of beatings, rapes and stalking. Almost 20% of our female college students and 12% of our high school girls suffer sexual violence.

Contrary to common perception, children and adults in rural areas are in fact at high risk of violence. A 2005 Massachusetts state study found that rural youth, like those in Berkshire County, suffered higher rates of violence than their urban counterparts and that those who suffered violence were 2-3 times more likely to consider or attempt suicide, to get pregnant and make someone pregnant, and they were more likely to fail in school and more likely to become victims or abusers themselves.

The stakes are high and we have much work to do. At the same time, funding is cut or stagnant, costs go up and our staff is stretched to its limit.

Impact: We are making a difference. From 2008 to 2012, our rate of restraining orders by population steadily dropped from 40% higher than the state average down to 28%. We have had no domestic violence related deaths since 2009, after suffering almost a death a year for the five years prior. We believe that working with our community partners, we are reaching people sooner and with better options.

Residents of rural communities have unique impediments to getting help. Lack of transportation, isolation, kinship ties, poverty and traditional values all contribute to the barriers rural victims face when attempting to end the abuse in their lives. Particularly for those living in small towns in which anonymity is an issue, people often do not identify where they live. Persons who identified their town of residence as Egremont used our individual counseling services and our court advocacy for protection orders in Southern Berkshire District Court.

We continue our work to increase our presence and capacity in the community. Last year, we conducted each month approximately 6-8 community events and presentations, including four south county radio shows including one in Spanish, two taped TV shows distributed countywide, a community forum on sexual assault with Gabrielle Senza called "Facing Shame" and a panel discussion on homelessness. We continue to distribute our electronic newsletter *Freeman Flash* to an ever growing email list. By letting people know who we are, what we do and how to reach us, we hope to both reach those who need help, engage those who want *to* help, and create momentum for change so that our children and communities can be safe.

Conclusion: This coming year we will continue to increase our capabilities. We are increasing our alliances. We have a modernized client record management system, allowing us to improve outcome tracking and organizational efficacy. Understanding the connection between domestic

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Berkshire United Way Berkshire United Way *Northern Berkshire United Way*
Williamstown Community Chest

violence and poverty, we incorporate strong economic advocacy into our work, providing staff with specialized training and tools.

We hope that you will continue to support our work and the often life-saving services we provide. In spite of funding cuts, we have maintained and improved our services due to the support and generosity of our community. Our organization operates on a shoestring and we spend each dollar carefully. You can be sure that your appropriation will be put to good use.

Please do call me if you have any questions about Elizabeth Freeman Center or our application. And if you would like us to speak anywhere, definitely let us know.

Thank you for your past support and for the ongoing support you provide us.

Sincerely,



Janis Broderick
Executive Director



March 11, 2015

Board of Selectmen
c/o Ms. Mary Brazie, Office Administrator
Town of Egremont
P.O. Box 368
Egremont, MA, 01258-0368

Dear Ms Brazie and Board of Selectmen,

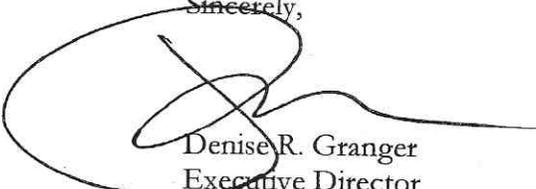
The Town of Egremont has been a consistent and ongoing supporter of the mission of HospiceCare in The Berkshires. On behalf of the agency, I would like to thank you for your very generous donations which enable us to expand our services and provide quality end-of-life care to all residents of Berkshire County. At this time, we would like to reinstate our request of support from the Town of Egremont in the amount of \$750.00.

HospiceCare in The Berkshires has admitted 537 patients throughout the year, with seven people identified as Egremont residents. Our daily census averaged at 138 people on our services. Through HospiceCare we provide family and patients with emotional support, medical care, bereavement services, and education. It is important to us that all of our patients are cared for and treated with the utmost respect and compassion.

Our agency relies on community support, such as your previous budget contributions, to allow us to fulfill our mission and sustain the level of care our patients, families, and the community expects.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Please contact me if there are any questions or a need for additional information.

Sincerely,



Denise R. Granger
Executive Director



Housatonic Valley Association

150 Kent Road
P.O. Box 28
Cornwall Bridge, CT 06754
860-672-6678

1383 Pleasant Street
P.O. Box 251
South Lee, MA 01260
413-394-9796

19 Furnace Bank Road
P.O. Box 315
Wassaic, NY 12592
845-789-1381

www.hvatoday.org

March 11, 2015



Mr. Bruce Turner, Chair
Town of Egremont
Board of Selectmen
P.O. Box 368
South Egremont, MA 01258

Dear Mr. Turner,

As you approach your budget planning season, I want to thank you for the Town of Egremont's membership in HVA with a gift of \$250 in the past. I ask you to please include an appropriation for HVA in your upcoming budget.

The Town of Egremont is one of 83 towns and cities within the 2000 square mile Housatonic River watershed. Together we have a stake in a healthy environment and clean sources of water.

With your help we...

- Protect water quality in rivers and streams with trained volunteers who assess shoreline conditions, work with communities to fix problems and remove truckloads of trash every year.
- Help residents assess land use plans and promote low impact development techniques to conserve natural areas and water quality.
- Assist elected officials and highway departments to assess road crossings for capital and hazard mitigation planning.
- Provide community decision makers with tools and data to help evaluate and improve development plans for your community.
- Provide computer mapping and natural resource assessment to town boards and leaders.
- Monitor PCB cleanup along the Housatonic River.
- Expand the Housatonic River Greenway from Hinsdale in the Berkshires to Stratford on Long Island Sound.
- Offer environmental education to students, creating lifelong nature stewards.

Together we are making a positive difference in the environmental health and quality of life of our communities. Please help us to continue by renewing your HVA membership.

Please let me know if you want more information, or would like an HVA representative to attend your town board or budget hearing. And again, thank you.

Sincerely,

Lynn Werner
Executive Director



Literacy Network of South Berkshire

100 Main Street, Lee, MA 01238
Tel: 413.243.0471 • Fax: 413.243.6754
www.litnetsb.org • info@litnetsb.org

March 9, 2015

Ms. Mary Brazie
Office Administrator
Town of Egremont
171 Egremont Plain Road
Egremont, MA 01258-0368

Dear Ms. Brazie,

We, at the Literacy Network of South Berkshire ("LitNet"), have exciting news to share. In 2014 LitNet provided free one-on-one tutoring services to over 130 adults in southern Berkshire County. As a result, 115 improved their spoken and written English skills, ten became U.S. citizens and five successfully passed the HiSET exam (high school equivalency diploma). Others entered community college, advanced in their employment and built a more solid financial base for their families.

We are very grateful for the Town of Egremont's past support and appreciate the opportunity to present a request to the Town for an additional \$400 for fiscal year 2016. Thank you for believing in our mission to serve adult learners in southern Berkshire County.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Laura Qualliotine".

Laura Qualliotine
Executive Director



**BARBARA MANRING
PRESIDENT**

**BRIAN TOBIN
VICE PRESIDENT**

**CHRIS MEYER
TREASURER**

**ERIK BRUUN
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MELISSA LYDON

CAREN MERCER

BARBARA SCHULMAN

BEN SILBERSTEIN

BARBARA WATKINS

**ANANDA TIMPANE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

March 10, 2014

Dear Egremont Board of Selectmen,

Railroad Street Youth Project, a 501 c3 community organization, is once again requesting funding from the Town of Egremont in the amount of \$1,500.00.

RSYP empowers young people by supporting the creation of youth-generated activities that promote self-worth, responsibility and intergenerational respect and communication. We serve 14-25 year old residents of southern Berkshire County and the surrounding area with mentoring and apprenticeship programs, a community health education initiative, an all-youth board that funds innovative, youth-inspired projects and trips, job training and career counseling, and a drop-in center where we offer referrals, free counseling, mediation, and advocacy services.

Last year, over **800+** young people were served at RSYP. **70** youth participated in YOB and youth-inspired projects, **58** young people participated in the Railroad Apprenticeship Program, **70** youth received Jobs & Career-related services, **309** high school students received Sexual Health Education, and **37** youth accessed counseling services with RSYP's social worker.

As you know, RSYP is only able to engage in these mission-driven initiatives, programs and activities because of the funding support we receive from communities and individuals who believe in and support of our mission of youth development and empowerment.

Egremont's ongoing support for RSYP over the years has made a significant difference in our ability to meet the needs of south county youth, and we thank you, and hope you will consider us again this year as we join together as a community to empower young people by supporting youth-inspired projects that promote responsibility, self-worth and intergenerational communication.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ananda Timpane". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Ananda Timpane
Executive Director



**PO Box 698, Great Barrington, MA 01230
Phone (413) 528-2475 www.rsyp.org**

Southern Berkshire Regional Emergency Planning Committee

C/O Fairview Hospital
29 Lewis Avenue
Great Barrington, MA 01230

SBREPC

Phone: 413-528-0790 - Ext. 3045
Fax: 413-528-8615
Email: dhutchinson@bhs1.org

August 2015

The Southern Berkshire Regional Emergency Planning Committee would like to take this opportunity to thank the Town of Egremont for its continued support. The SBREPC works with Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency, the State Fire Marshal, the federal Environmental Protection Agency, FEMA, Berkshire County Regional Planning, and the Western Massachusetts Homeland Security Council, along with state and local police and fire services in the twelve towns of South Berkshire County. SBREPC also works with the Red Cross, local boards of health, and animal assistance groups here in Berkshire County.

The Southern Berkshire Regional Emergency Planning Committee holds monthly meetings at Fairview Hospital in Great Barrington. Select Board members are encouraged to attend. Participation in the SBREPC fulfills your town's obligation to belong to a LEPC or REPC and assures you are meeting the goals and missions of SARA Title III.

Over the past twelve months, the Committee has participated in an anti-terrorism exercise funded by the WRHSAC and facilitated by the DHS; acquired a \$5,000 grant from the WRHSAC to finalize a written regional shelter plan for south county; purchased equipment (including 2 tablets, badge making equipment and signs) using a MEMA grant, which is available for use by all member towns. The SBREPC also coordinates training and exercises for the member towns, fulfilling a requirement of the Commonwealth. A Multi-Agency Coordination Center is being developed in Berkshire County, with members preparing standard operating guides, and protocols for its activation and operation.

Southern Berkshire County continues to experience weather related disasters, including hurricanes, severe storms and snow events. We continue to work to expand the resources available to our towns during all hazards.

SOUTHERN BERKSHIRE DISTRICT DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' SERVICES (SBDDVS)

Thank you for allowing me to service the member towns, their veterans, and widows. We have made great strides in reaching out to our veterans in our local area, letting them know the various services available to them from Elderly Services, Community Actions and also the local senior centers.

During FY 2015 we have seen a slight decrease in all areas of operation and currently have 41 active Chapter 115 claims.

Chapter 115 Submissions and Return from the State:

Town	FY 2015 Submitted 7/01/14-6/30/15	Pmt Due in FY 2016 -FY 2015 - 75%
Egremont	\$10,726.63	\$8,044.97

Over the last year we have completed the following for our member town's veterans:

Applications for VA Health Care	42
ALS/Disability/A&A/Appeals/Life Insurance	71
DD 214s	50
Request for Grave Markers	20
Tax Abatements/SS help/Other requests	12
Flags to funerals homes for veterans	55
Assisted with Dr. appointments	49
Home and Office Visits	471
Veterans Services Phone Calls	1521

For FY 2015 District budget has been reduced by the reserve resulting in a smaller assessment for the member towns. During these trying financial times all veterans and widows are encouraged to contact this office or the US Department of Veterans Affairs and review current entitlements as many changes have taken place.

Egremont's apportionment towards the FY 2015 DVS budget was \$4,981.96 – this number was based on population percentage on the 2010 Census.

Respectfully Submitted,

Laurie J. Hils
District Director