

# connecting people, building communities

Winter 2013

News from the Delaware Community Foundation

## Honoring Eric by Giving PAWS a Hand

Over the years, Rick Altemus, his son Eric, and their chocolate Labrador, Chip, developed special memories as they volunteered together at PAWS for People, a nonprofit that trains people and their pets to provide “pet therapy” to individuals in need.

When Eric died last year at the young age of 27, Rick and Ann Altemus decided to honor his memory by establishing an endowment fund for PAWS for People at the Delaware Community Foundation.

“Ann and I decided that starting an endowment for PAWS for People was a good way of remembering Eric while helping out an organization that does so much for the people it serves,” Mr. Altemus said. “And all the money donated to PAWS stays and helps local people.”

PAWS, which stands for Pet-Assisted Visitation Volunteer Services, trains volunteers and their pets to serve as therapeutic visitors to hospitals, assisted-living facilities, rehabilitation centers, and elementary schools.

Rick and Chip have been PAWS volunteers for three years and sometimes make as many as 24 visits per month.

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Rick Altemus' chocolate Labrador, Chip, is a volunteer with Pet-Assisted Visitation Volunteer Services (PAWS).

## Tatiana Copeland Gives \$100,000 to Specialisterne Fund

*A tale of two families and their journeys from Denmark to Delaware*

Tatiana Copeland fled the tumult in Europe as a young child. The nation of Denmark gave her family sanctuary, saving their lives and setting them on the path to immigration to the United States.



Tatiana Copeland with her mother in Denmark

Mrs. Copeland has never forgotten.

So when she heard that the Denmark-based nonprofit Specialisterne was creating a fund at the Delaware Community Foundation, she donated \$100,000 to the fund as a way of thanking the nation that welcomed her family when many others were turning refugees away.

“All my life, I have been waiting for an opportunity to pay back Denmark,” Mrs. Copeland said. “When I heard about the Specialisterne Fund, I knew it was my chance to at least symbolically thank Denmark.”

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## Making a Difference in Kent County: CenDel Foundation



Low-income Kent County residents will benefit from increased services thanks to hundreds of thousands of dollars in grants now

being awarded by the CenDel Foundation at the Delaware Community Foundation.

In January, the CenDel Foundation awarded \$200,000 in charitable grants from the Potter Charity Trust. One of the oldest charitable trusts in the country, the Potter Trust was created in 1843 by Col. Benjamin Potter to benefit the poor in Kent County. The CenDel Foundation recently began managing the Potter Trust's grantmaking process.

In this first grant cycle, 26 nonprofits received grants ranging from \$1,000 to \$25,000 to provide a range of critical services, including dental care, mental health services, emergency shelter, and support for veterans transitioning back into civilian life.

This spring, CenDel will award another \$200,000-\$250,000 in grants from the Potter Trust. Nonprofit organizations serving the poor in Kent County are invited to apply. Applications and guidelines are available at [www.delcf.org/grants](http://www.delcf.org/grants). **The deadline is March 15.**

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## Giving PAWS a Hand

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"Sometimes it's just a matter of cheering someone up," Mr. Altemus said. "Other times the interaction with Chip – petting or brushing her – actually helps with an individual's physical therapy."

Mr. Altemus points to Johnny\*, a young boy at a summer sports camp for children with special learning needs. Johnny had refused to participate in any physical activity – until Chip came along. Johnny began taking Chip for progressively longer walks and racing the dog through tunnels in an obstacle course.

"Johnny's parents were just ecstatic at the progress they saw over the 10-week summer camp session he attended," Mr. Altemus said.

PAWS for People has more than 300 therapy teams like Rick and Chip visiting more than 130 locations in Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

The Altemuses' fund is the first endowment fund for PAWS, which relies primarily on fundraising events and donations from individuals to cover its \$250,000 annual operating budget.

"Having an endowment with the Delaware Community Foundation not only gives us greater visibility, it also demonstrates to foundations and potential donors that we are a stable, reputable nonprofit organization," Executive Director Lynne Robinson said.

The endowment will provide a small annual income at first, said Ms. Robinson, but the organization is encouraging others to add to the fund so that it can become a significant source of revenue that will provide stability and financial security for PAWS for People.

As an added incentive, thanks to a challenge grant from the Welfare Foundation, monies donated to PAWS for People through July 2013 will be matched up to \$50,000, said Janet Luke, PAWS' director of development.

"As a newer organization, we're still getting the word out about what PAWS for People is," Ms. Luke said. "This endowment is an indicator that we are being embraced long term by the community, and it sends a strong message of endorsement to foundations, donors and potential volunteers alike."

*\*Johnny is not the boy's real name.  
We have changed it to protect his privacy.*