



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BERKSHIRE BANK FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES GRANTS

Foundation Awards More Than \$440,000 in First Half of 2011

PITTSFIELD, MASS, July 6, 2011 – Berkshire Bank Foundation announced today it awarded \$441,864.00 in grants from January 1, 2011 to June 30, 2011 to nonprofit organizations in Berkshire County and the Pioneer Valley in Massachusetts, in New York State, and in Southern Vermont, where Berkshire Bank has a presence.

While Berkshire Bank Foundation's priorities are education and community/economic development projects, it also donated to youth, cultural and human service organizations.

Berkshire County recipients include:

- ◇ Berkshire Enterprises – Business Owners Training and Support
- ◇ Barrington Stage Company – Playwright Mentoring Project
- ◇ IS183 Art School – Learning Through Arts Elementary School Education Program
- ◇ Norman Rockwell Museum – Student Education Program
- ◇ Morningside Community School – Career Lab Renovation Program

Pioneer Valley recipients include:

- ◇ American Red Cross Pioneer Valley Chapter – Tornado Relief
- ◇ HAP Inc. – First Time Homebuyer Training Program
- ◇ Pioneer Valley Regional Ventures Center – Leadership Training Program
- ◇ Square One, Inc. – King Street Children's Center
- ◇ Western Mass Food Bank – Community Nutrition Education

New York recipients include:

- ◇ Capital District Habitat For Humanity – Alexander Street Build Project
- ◇ Park Playhouse, Inc – Children's Summer Programs
- ◇ Northeast Parent Child Society – Career Training Program
- ◇ Albany Symphony Orchestra – Music in the Schools Program
- ◇ Rensselaer County Housing Resources – Home Repairs Program

Vermont recipients included:

- ◇ Chaffee Art Center – Creation of Children's Art Studio
- ◇ Downtown Rutland Partnership – Friday Night Live

- ◇ Friends Foundation for MEMS – Early Literacy Outreach Program
- ◇ Northshire Day School – Early Childhood Teacher Training
- ◇ Weston Playhouse – Student Ticket Program

A complete list of Berkshire Bank Foundation supported organizations in 2011 can be found by visiting www.berkshirebank.com/foundation.

Berkshire Bank Foundation Executive Director, Peter J. Lafayette, stated “Berkshire Bank is pleased to continue to make grants to deserving nonprofit organizations throughout its expanding market area. Our goal is to support programs and projects that have a meaningful and positive impact and improve the lives of people in the communities the bank serves.”

In addition to monetary support, the foundation also oversees the bank’s growing Employee Volunteer Program that carries out group community service projects benefiting schools, nonprofit organizations and communities within the bank’s service area. In 2010, more than 350 employees donated over 17,000 hours of service to benefit community organizations across the bank’s footprint.

Background

Berkshire Bank Foundation Inc, the charitable arm of Berkshire Bank, [America’s Most Exciting BankSM](#), is a leader in philanthropy and community involvement. The foundation’s mission is to enhance the quality of life in Berkshire Bank’s footprint by providing priority funding to education and community/economic development projects. It also funds programs dedicated to the arts, education, and human services. Since its inception, the foundation has awarded more than \$15 million to nonprofit organizations in its footprint. For more information, visit www.berkshirebank.com/foundation, “Like” them on www.facebook.com/BerkshireBank or call Peter J. Lafayette, Executive Director at 413-447-1722.

Berkshire Hills Bancorp is the parent of Berkshire Bank, [America’s Most Exciting BankSM](#). The company has \$3.2 billion in assets and 48 full service branch offices in Massachusetts, New York, and Vermont. The company provides personal and business banking, insurance, wealth management, private banking, and asset based lending services. Berkshire Bank provides 100% deposit insurance protection for all deposit accounts, regardless of amount, based on a combination of FDIC insurance and the [Depositors Insurance Fund](#) (DIF). The company currently has a pending agreement to acquire Legacy Bancorp, Inc. For more information, visit www.berkshirebank.com or call 800-773-5601.

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