

### **The Garden Club of New Haven GCA Founders Fund Award, 2014**

To build upon the success of the GCNH's Garden Club of America Centennial Tree Project, the club applied for a \$30,000 GCA Founders Fund grant. In fact, the GCA president at the time encouraged us to apply. We received the grant and used the funds to continue and expand our original Centennial Tree Project.

The projects of the original Centennial Project had been 2 tours (cell phone accessed and printed brochure) of the New Haven Green, growing and fostering elm tree saplings, and producing a documentary film about the history of the New Haven Green. The club expanded these outreach phases by using the Founders Fund grant to continue paying for the tours and advertising them to the public. Sales of the documentary film on DVD continued and were facilitated by the New Haven Museum.

By this time, the elm saplings were in foster homes throughout Greater New Haven – over 100 of them. Monies from the Founders Fund grant paid for tracking the growth and health of the trees. The club paid Yale Forestry School students to do this work – photographing and measuring each tree.

A key expansion of our outreach was to write a curriculum for middle and high school students about the history of the New Haven Green and its importance to the city of New Haven. This one week study of the Green, which included lesson plans and all ancillary materials, was distributed to every Social Studies department in New Haven County. Busing was provided for teachers to bring their students to the Green. Workshops on how to effectively use the materials were offered as part of staff development; all of the social studies teachers in New Haven attended at least one workshop. This was an interesting exercise, since many of the students in New Haven knew little or nothing about the Green and its rich history.

The club's use of these funds effectively expanded our community outreach to residents and visitors of all ages, and we were able to marry the seminal importance of elm trees to New Haven (the Elm City) and the rich history of our city.

Billie Ladd and Deborah Edwards