

## **Windham Seniors Donate to Endowment Campaign**

by Barbara O'Brien

The latest contribution to Windham Endowment for Community Advancement comes from a group of residents that have been out of high school for a long time, but still care deeply about the young people who are coming up through the grades today.

Members of Windham Seniors, Inc. have generously donated \$2,500 to the Endowment's Capital Campaign for Windham High School. Those funds are to be used toward the Endowment's next special project, which is the construction of a greenhouse at Windham High School. Presently, there is a total of \$7,500 in the capital campaign fund, money that Endowment representative Diane Carpenter referred to as a "seed pool."

In recognizing the Seniors for their donation, Carpenter said, "Thanks for shining a bright light on the importance of education."

During the April 6 School Board meeting, Carpenter introduced Cheri Maw, who is serving as the chairman of the greenhouse sub-committee. "Ironically," Maw said, "I have been known to kill silk flowers. It's not my horticultural experience that's important, though; it's my project management experience." Referring to her lack of the proverbial "green thumb," Maw said, if she had been given the chance to work with plants hands-on while in high school, maybe the outcome would have been different.

A greenhouse facility was included in the original plan for the new Windham High School, but was not approved by voters when taken to the ballot on Election Day. The decision not to add certain amenities to the original concept was a financial one.

Maw said that she has already met with Mary Anderson, the Dean of Math and Science at Windham High, to discuss the parameters of the greenhouse endeavor. Plans are to offer laboratory experience at a hands-on level with biology, botany, and ecology. Aspects of agriculture will also be included, Maw said. The more the proposed project is discussed, "the more ideas snowball," she said, commenting on the importance of student input.

Studying horticulture and its effects on the planet "ties in with being a good tenant of Earth," Maw emphasized. "We are blessed to have such strong community support," she said.

Currently, Maw is looking at cost options for greenhouses. There are grants available, she said, and there are people on the sub-committee who have grant-writing experience. One of the first undertakings for Maw will be to develop phases for the project, as well as an approximate timeline. "A little bit at a time, and we'll get there eventually," she added.

The estimate for the total cost of all phases of the greenhouse project is approximately \$100,000, Maw said. "This is just a ballpark figure," she said. "It's optimistic," Maw said, "but phase one may be finished for the 2011-2012 school year."

School Superintendent Frank Bass said that the plans are "still in the embryonic stage." Once the greenhouse is operational, however, there will be many curriculum tie-ins, as well as after-school opportunities for students to make use of the facility, Dr. Bass commented.