



Submitted photo

The Coventry Public School District won a \$440,356 grant from the Rhode Island Foundation for behavioral health services. (L-R) Robert Robillard, Coventry Department of Human Services director, Coventry Public School Superintendent Craig Levis, Coventry School Committee Chair Katherine Patenaude, Coventry Teachers' Alliance President Kelly Erinakes and Coventry

# Coventry Schools get \$440K grant from RI Foundation

COVENTRY – The Coventry Public School District has won a \$440,356 grant from the Rhode Island Foundation to reduce the potential for student suicide attempts, bullying and behavioral problems.

“Helping Rhode Islanders lead healthier lives is one of our priorities. This grant will address behavioral health needs before people are in crisis. This work will lead to better outcomes across the board while targeting communities that are disproportionately impacted by behavioral health issues,” said Neil D. Steinberg, president and CEO of the Foundation.

The Coventry grant is one of the first

from the Behavioral Health Fund at the Foundation, which was created in August 2018 by the Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner with a commitment of \$5 million in funding from Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island (BCBSRI).

“The organizations and projects we are funding today are truly impressive,” said Kim Keck, president and CEO of BCBSRI. “With innovative approaches and use of emerging best practices, we are confident they can achieve long-term, sustainable outcomes. I look forward to seeing great progress in the next few years and thank all of the organiza-

tions for helping us to realize our vision to passionately lead a state of health and well-being across Rhode Island.”

The school district will use the funding to train educators, support staff, health workers, first responders and others who work directly with youth to identify early mental health needs.

“Bringing all agencies of Coventry together to address our young people’s mental health, substance use and other needs before they are in crisis is the primary goal,” said Coventry School Superintendent Craig Levis. “Everyone is

See GRANT, page A3

# Grant

Continued from page A1

needed; everyone is responsible.”

The Coventry – Trauma Informed Community (C-TIC) initiative grew out of an increasing awareness that children from all demographics can suffer lifelong-lasting trauma due factors such as poverty, domestic abuse, homelessness, death of a loved one, divorce and sexual mistreatment.

“C-TIC will increase trauma-informed education with a focus on reducing suicidal thoughts and attempts, drug use, bullying, school dropouts, criminal acts and other activities continuing into adulthood,” said Levis.

Research indicates that more than 50 percent of all children have experienced at least one traumatic event, according to Levis.

“We need to keep the laser beam focus on children. We will train every adult in Coventry who has an impact on children’s lives to understand the impact that trauma has on children and to be proactive in their lives,”

he said.

Coventry is among six nonprofits that will share \$2.6 million in grants statewide to support primary and secondary prevention models and high-quality, affordable behavioral health care services.

The Center for Evidence Based Practice at Bradley Hospital, the Care Transformation Collaborative, Clinica Esperanza, the Rhode Island Association for Infant Mental Health and Rhode Island College also won funding. All the grants will be paid over three years.

The Foundation received 62 requests for funding, which were reviewed by an advisory committee comprised of behavioral health care providers, policymakers and representatives of the health insurance industry.

The Rhode Island Foundation is the largest and most comprehensive funder of nonprofit organizations in Rhode Island. Working with generous and visionary donors, the Foundation raised \$114 million and awarded \$52 million in grants to organizations addressing the state’s most pressing issues and needs of diverse communities in 2018.