



HomeSharing, Inc.

40th Annual Gala Celebration Honorees

The Robert and Joan Dircks Foundation

The Robert and Joan Dircks Foundation provides grants to small nonprofit organizations. The geographic area of focus is primarily in New Jersey and locations of the Foundation Trustees.

The mission of the Robert & Joan Dircks Foundation is to support non-profit organizations that enrich and improve the quality of life for individuals primarily located in the New Jersey area. The focus is to encourage innovative programs and projects that benefit and improve the lives of children and individuals who are physically, mentally, or economically disadvantaged.

Robert J. Dircks and his five children, Robert, Thomas, Joan, William and Carolyn, established the Joan M. Dircks Foundation, in 1991. Robert created the foundation after the untimely death of his wife, Joan, in 1990 from cancer. After his death in 1996, the foundation's name was changed to include Robert's, and became The Robert and Joan Dircks Foundation.

Robert and Joan were very generous with their time, talent and money throughout their lives together. They both felt strongly about giving their money to charity after their deaths and with this intent, the Foundation was established.

As the Foundation evolved, the mission was refined to focus primarily on nonprofit organizations that provide programs and projects that benefit individuals that are physically, mentally, or economically disadvantaged.

In the past 30 years, the Foundation has awarded over 1,664 grants totaling over \$13.3 million. HomeSharing, Inc. has been a fortunate recipient of their generosity for many years.

Gerald L. Harris

Gerry Harris graduated college in 1972, and started his career at Woolworths, serving as a store manager for 3 years. He left there, and spent 10 years as a NY Metro area food broker, selling to select supermarkets.

In 1986, he started his own business importing and selling goods in the US. In 2004, he and his wife purchased B&L Printing, a small, existing print shop in Somerville, growing it by 2019 to three times its original size. In 2024, he sold B&L Printing to Hummel Printing – he sees that as a win/win for everyone.

Gerry is being recognized for his contributions to the community and to HomeSharing.

He is an active Rotarian, having joined the Rotary International organization in 1984. He was the Rotarian of the Year for New Jersey 7510 District, the 92nd in the world to receive the Cliff Dochterman Award, a 3-time Club President, has co-chaired the district high school level Interact Committee for many years, co-ordinates approximately 400 volunteers for Clean Ocean Action for Sandy Hook, where Rotary cooks and serves 1,000 meals in 1½ hours to all of the volunteers that participate that day.

He is also an active adult leader in the Boy Scouts, where he started volunteering as an adult leader in 1986, serving as a leader in Cub Scout Pack 56, and as an Assistant Scoutmaster on countless trips. He has also completed Wood Badge, a National Boy Scout Management Training Program. He also teaches Dutch oven cooking on the first Saturday of December every year at the University of Scouting - rain or shine or snow!

B&L Printing was recognized as the Company of the Year by the Patriots Path Council. Having donated the annual report for over a decade, Gerry has assisted HomeSharing in many ways for many years. With his self-described gift of making people comfortable talking, he was one of the best fundraisers for our annual phonathon, as well as a supporter of our other fundraising efforts for many years.

Gerry has provided printing services to HomeSharing for years at cost, and helped in many other ways.