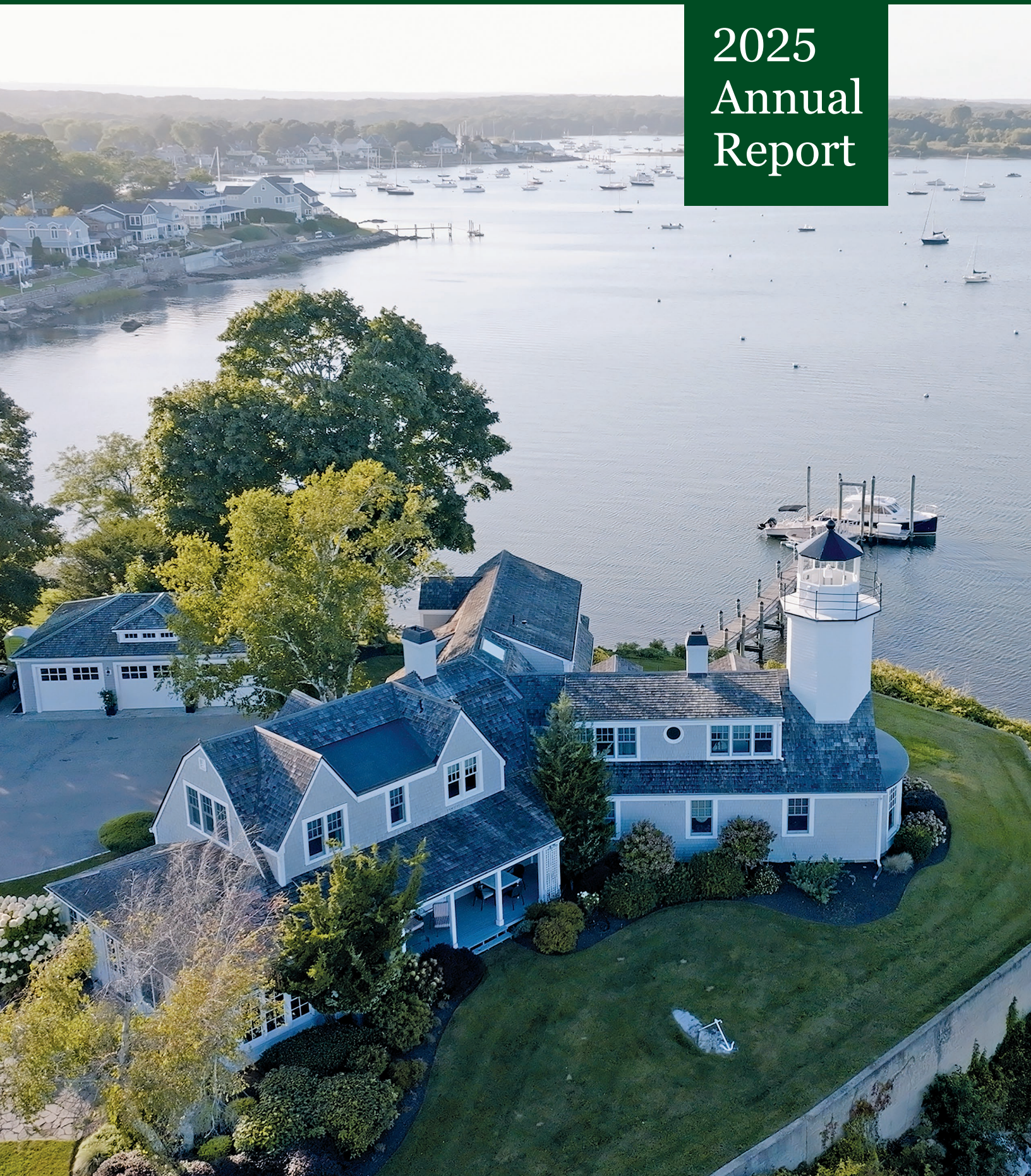


2025  
Annual  
Report



# From the Director

(Left to right): David Zapatka, Cathy Shippee, Amy Sonder, Sheryl Hack, and Russell Shippee at Poplar Point Lighthouse.

Dear Friends,

Thank you for so warmly welcoming me to your beautiful state. Your commitment to protecting its special places, and your support of Preserve Rhode Island's work to do so, is both greatly appreciated and truly inspiring.

Preserve RI has always leaned into the local: celebrating the people and recognizing the projects that actively advance preservation goals through the Rhody Awards; partnering with towns and individuals to safeguard significant historic properties through our preservation easement program; protecting important historic landscape features like Aquidneck Island's stone walls; and finding productive, sustainable, contemporary uses for historic buildings. This work is more important than ever given the critical role that vacant, deteriorated and underutilized historic structures can play in addressing Rhode Island's acute need for housing, sustainability, and ongoing economic revitalization.

In 2026 you can look forward to Preserve RI taking our stewardship of the Lippitt House Museum to a new level by carrying out the first masonry repointing and selective brownstone replacement project in the house's 161-year history; celebrating our nation's 250th anniversary and Preserve RI's 70th, at the Walker, Dexter and Lippitt properties; and concerted advocacy to fund the state's Historic Tax Credit program, a critical tool in advancing our collective goals.

Thank you for all you do to encourage this vital work. Your efforts do not go unnoticed.

With appreciation and best regards,

Shery



Sheryl Hack,  
Executive Director

FRONT COVER: Poplar Point Lighthouse, Wickford, a 2025 Rhody Awardee. (Photo: Sky Sabin Productions, LLC)

RIGHT: Shery at Lippitt House Museum.



# A Big Thank You to Outgoing Board Members Sheila Brush and Mike Sherry

Like many non-profit organizations, we have term-limits on board service to ensure fresh thinking and new perspectives. The downside of this policy is that each year we need to say goodbye to trustees who we'd rather hold on to. Sheila and Mike both set the bar high for board service. We will miss the dedication, knowledge, and experience they lent to Preserve RI.



“ Our family chose to settle in Rhode Island because we fell in love with its rich and diverse heritage. Our historic places — from agricultural landscapes to bayside villages to urban neighborhoods and downtowns —reflect that heritage. I don't want to see us lose the physical reminders of our state's history, good chapters and bad. Preserve Rhode Island, as our only statewide nonprofit historic preservation organization, plays a critical role in assisting local preservation efforts, using historic sites to tell the full stories of our communities, and building a statewide voice for the recognition, protection, and thoughtful reuse of historic places.”

~ Sheila Brush

“ The past nine years were an absolute pleasure working with a dedicated and dynamic board and staff. The most engaging and rewarding activities for me were the site visits to evaluate buildings for potential preservation projects.”

~ Mike Sherry



LEFT: Dexter House, Preserve RI's Providence headquarters.

## HELP US REFRESH DEXTER HOUSE FOR AMERICA'S 250TH CELEBRATION!

Providence's Dexter House (c.1754) is not only Preserve RI's Headquarters, but a rare example of an early Providence farmstead. Once part of a large estate stretching from Olney Street to Smithfield Avenue and east to the Seekonk River, the property played a key role in the American Revolution. After General Rochambeau helped to defeat the British in Yorktown, his troops encamped at Dexter Farm while awaiting ships to take them back to France.

Preserve RI has been the property's steward since 1977. Over the decades, we have embarked on multiple restoration projects including replacing the asphalt roof with period-appropriate wood shingles, recreating the original 9-over-9 windows, and making landscape improvements that opened up the street view to the house. To celebrate America's 250th and Preserve RI's 70th anniversary we'd like Dexter House to look its best. Desired improvements include interior and exterior painting, window restoration, and minor landscape enhancements.

If you'd like to contribute to helping us refresh Dexter House in time to celebrate these important milestones, please donate at [preserveri.org/dexter-house](https://preserveri.org/dexter-house).

# Top 10 Achievements for 2025



## [1] Working with the Town of Narragansett to Protect Kinney Bungalow

In 2024, Narragansett voters supported a ballot initiative to protect Kinney Bungalow (c.1900) with a preservation easement held by Preserve RI. Last year, Preserve RI worked with the Town to finalize the easement to ensure the building is enjoyed by future generations.

## [2] Supporting Local Preservation Efforts Through Grants

Partnering for a sixth year with The 1772 Foundation, we awarded matching grants totaling \$125,000 to 18 nonprofit organizations maintaining historic buildings in Rhode Island.

Grantees extended from North Smithfield to Westerly to Bristol, and support nonprofits with missions ranging from social services for older adults to educational programming in

science and environmental studies. Since 2020, we have overseen the allocation of more than \$725,000 in funding through this grant program.

## SAFEGUARDING NARRAGANSETT'S KINNEY BUNGALOW

Built in the East Indian style, Kinney Bungalow is owned by the Town of Narragansett and is currently used as an event rental space. After years of discussion, and a successful ballot initiative, Kinney Bungalow has become Preserve RI's first easement on a municipal property.

“ Kinney Bungalow is one of the remaining architectural and historical gems from the Narragansett of the past century and which continues to be used as a wonderful event venue. The Land Conservancy Trust reached out to Preserve RI about its Preservation Easement Program in order to ensure that the Town would have access to the necessary technical expertise to maintain this property for the benefit of future generations.”

~ Thomas Rogers, Former Chairman of the Narragansett Land Conservancy Trust



[1] Kinney Bungalow, Narragansett.

[2] Conanicut Friends Meetinghouse, owned by the Jamestown Historical Society, being moved onto its new foundation.

[3] Windows from Chase Farmhouse being restored by a professional.

[4] Primus House, formerly known as Shakespeare's Head.

[5] Stedman and Fuller Lofts in Providence, a 2025 Rhody Awardee.

### [3] Stewardship of Walker House and Chase Farmhouse

Being role models for good stewardship of historic properties and experimenting with different approaches to fund their continuous preservation is part of our mission. In early 2025, we wrapped up an extensive interior restoration of the Philip Walker House (c.1724) in East Providence, allowing us to turn it back into a private residence. At Chase Farmhouse (c.1890), where we have a 20-year curatorship program in partnership with the Town of Lincoln, we began a window restoration project that will continue into 2026.

### [4] Securing the Future of a Providence Landmark

Shakespeare's Head (1772) was saved in the 1930s by the Shakespeare's Head Association



and later transferred to the Providence Preservation Society (PPS). Our Preservation Easement Program allowed PPS the ability to sell the property secure in the knowledge that Shakespeare's Head will be safeguarded by Preserve RI in perpetuity. The property, renamed Primus House, is now owned by the

Center for Reflective History, a new nonprofit organization established to uncover, preserve, and explore the social histories associated with the building for over two and a half centuries.



### [5] Celebrating Excellence in Historic Preservation

Each year, the Rhody Awards for Historic Preservation spotlight people and projects that reimagine historic properties to enrich our communities, honor our heritage, and address societal challenges. This year's awardees were honored for work including protecting and restoring iconic landmarks, converting abandoned mill buildings into much needed housing and commercial spaces for local businesses and restaurants, and creating community spaces that help build local economies.



[6] New signage at Dexter House, Preserve RI's headquarters in Providence.

[7] A family searches for a scavenger hunt clue on the ceiling during the Civics Celebration. (Photo: Jon Lavieri)

## [6] Giving Preserve Rhode Island a Fresh Look

In 2024, we worked with consultants to take a deep dive into our communications and develop a five-year communications plan. This year, we have completed a rebranding process that improves accessibility for the visually impaired and has given us a refreshed logo, website, and signage at Walker House, Lippitt House Museum, and our Dexter House headquarters.



museum, for many their first visit to a historic house museum, are always a highlight for students.

## [8] Providing Free Advice to Individuals and Communities

Our popular CPR (Community Preservation Response) Program helps owners and other interested parties navigate a myriad of challenges, from advising local communities on ways to repurpose historic structures, to making tradespeople referrals, to recommending strategies to save buildings in peril.

[8] Preserve RI staff in the field.

[9] Lippitt House Museum, Providence.

[10] Arctic Mill in West Warwick was converted into 136 apartments, including 31 workforce housing units.

## [7] Celebrating the Immigrant Community at Lippitt House Museum

We were delighted to host a celebration of Lippitt House Museum's award-winning Civics Program for Adult English Language Learners—opening the museum to over **250** students and their families. Since launching in 2017, the program has served more than 700 people through engaging, context-rich, history programming in partnership with three local literacy organizations. Field trips to the





## HOSTING A CIVICS CELEBRATION AT LIPPITT HOUSE MUSEUM

In May, Lippitt House Museum hosted a special celebration honoring participants in their Civics Program for adult English language learners. This award-winning program features interactive lessons focused on history and civics, culminating in a guided tour of the museum.

The event drew many enthusiastic students who had taken part in the program and their families. Guests explored Lippitt House, connected with representatives of local community organizations, and enjoyed activities throughout the house and grounds, including a scavenger hunt that was popular with participants of all ages.

## [9] Launching a Once-in-a-Lifetime Masonry Restoration Project at Lippitt House Museum

In 2026 we're embarking on a comprehensive masonry restoration project for Lippitt House for the first time in its 160-year history. The necessary repointing and brownstone repairs will restore weather-tightness to the building, ensuring that key architectural features, original interior finishes, and museum collections are protected from water damage, while also maintaining safe community access to the museum and its grounds. Last year we completed the planning phases and secured the bulk of the funding.

## [10] Making Progress to Fix RI's State Historic Tax Credit Program

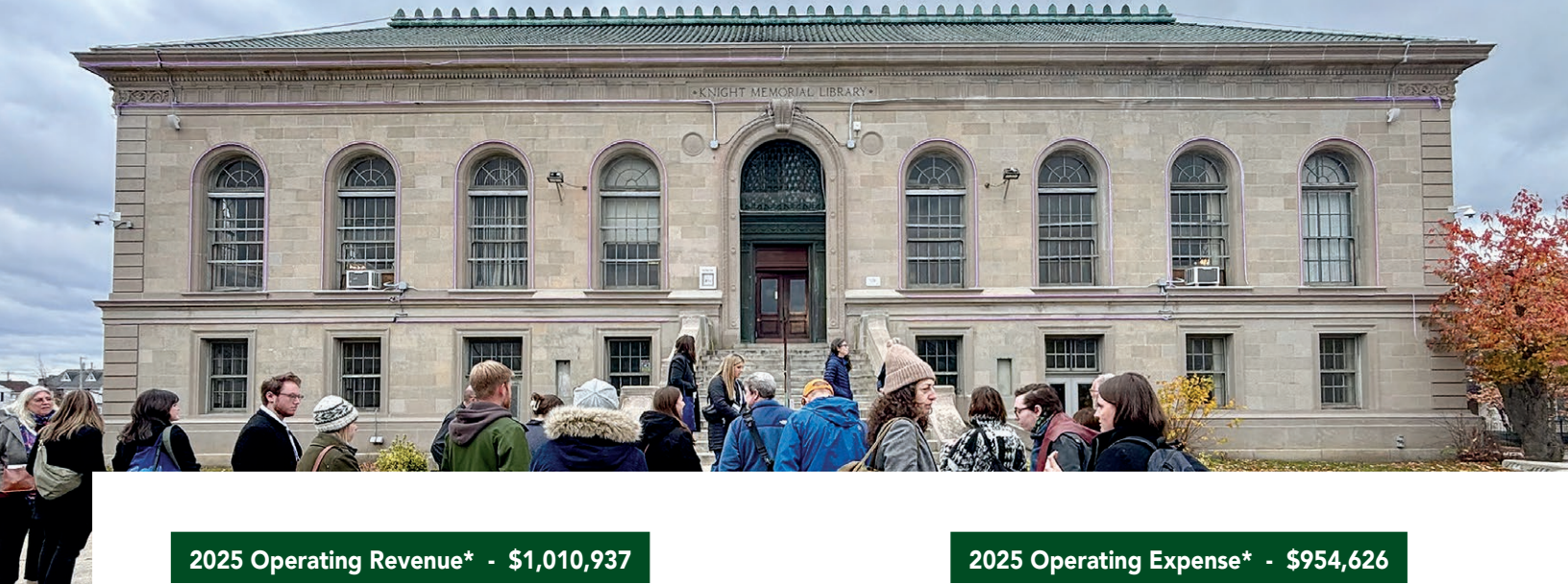
In partnership with Grow Smart RI, we advocated for fixing the state historic tax credit

program. Advocacy efforts with state legislators led to bill S0940 being passed, making larger projects more feasible. While a major victory for the program's future, there is still much work to do to make the program competitive with that of neighboring states.



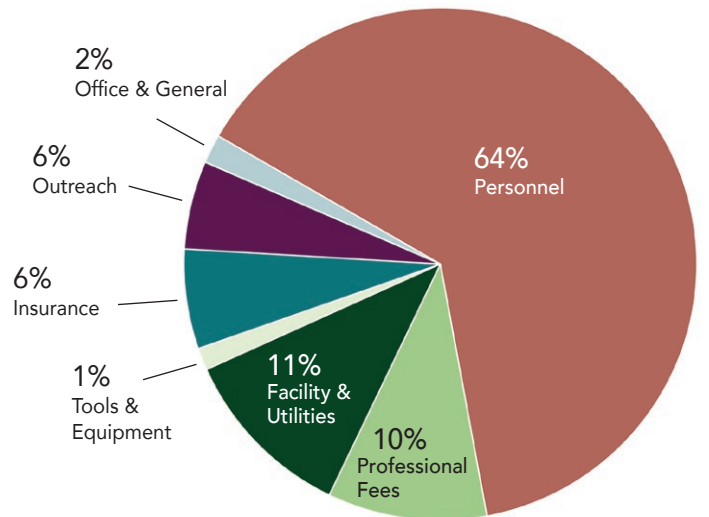
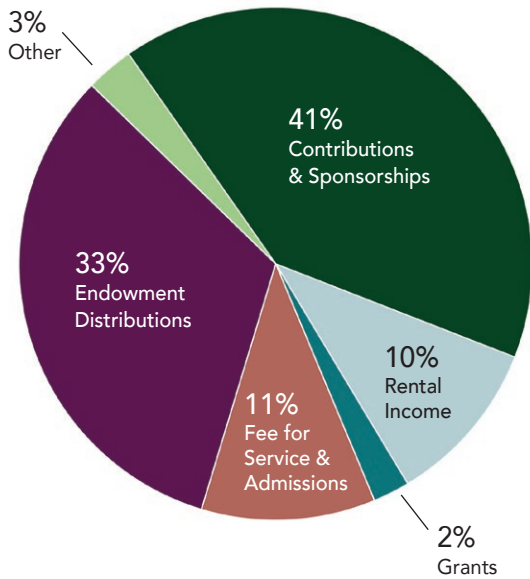
# Financials

Preserve RI organized a site visit to the Providence Public Library during the Association for Preservation Technology Conference.



**2025 Operating Revenue\* - \$1,010,937**

**2025 Operating Expense\* - \$954,626**



*\*Unaudited Financials*

In addition to contributions that support Preserve RI's programs and operations, last year we raised over \$283,000 to directly support special preservation projects across the state.

RIGHT: Preserve RI staff at the Scotch and Champagne Party at Lippitt House Museum.



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The fountain at  
Lippitt House Museum  
in Providence.

