

COMMUNITY *News*

Foundation Marks Silver Anniversary

Get ready to celebrate as the Community Foundation for South Central New York turns 25 this fall.

Looking back at the Foundation's achievements over the past quarter-century, we're also exploring new ways to serve communities across our five-county region with local philanthropy, carefully tailored to local needs.

When the Board of the Stewart W. and Willma C. Hoyt Foundation and its executive director, Judith Peckham, formed the Community Foundation in 1997, their goal was to expand support beyond Hoyt's own Broome County region. The Community Foundation started with \$1 million from Hoyt, plus another \$2 million from the community. Today, we're a \$34 million foundation, and since 1997 we've made \$23 million in grants. We hold 144 funds of varying sizes and purposes, each designed to let donors support the causes closest to their hearts.

"I continue to be thrilled at the Foundation's progress and growth," said Peckham, who retired as executive director of the Conrad & Virginia Klee Foundation in 2019. Far beyond simply providing a convenient tool for people who want to support worthy causes, the

Community Foundation approaches its work with a deep interest in, knowledge of and vision for the community, she said. "And now it's beginning to fulfill that vision in so many ways."

Stephen Feehan, a member of the Foundation's original Board and a financial planner in Binghamton, noted how well the Foundation's knowledge and vision serve individuals who want to make a lasting impact on their communities.

"We don't know what are going to be the most important needs of the community in the future," Feehan said. Donors want to entrust their legacy gifts to thoughtful people who will base future funding decisions on the facts that apply at that time. The Community Foundation attracts such decision makers to its Board and grants panels, he said. "They're good people. They're involved, and they have a process and a framework for making their decisions."

Over time, the Community Foundation has responded adeptly to emerging needs, including the floods of 2006 and 2011 and the COVID-19 pandemic, Peckham said. "They're

positioned well enough, have grown enough and have established themselves with enough people to quickly round up a special fund or some key donors around a significant community crisis."

Beyond those emergencies, in recent years the Foundation has also convened groups of funders to focus on ongoing challenges. For example, we played a leadership role in bringing a full-service grocery store to the North Side of Binghamton, and we've worked with the City of Binghamton, the Ross Park Zoo and the Discovery Center on improvements to Ross Park. Most recently, we've collaborated on the issues of affordable housing and child care.

Among the Foundation's newer goals is to offer more

support to small, non-traditional community groups. One recent step in that direction comes through our partnership with an organization called Resilia, whose online platform helps grassroots organizations strengthen their capacity to serve (see story on page 2).

And in a broader sense, we will continue to pursue a culture of "Yes," finding ways to support to as many worthy causes as we can. To help us keep up with all the opportunities, we recently added a fifth position to our small staff, welcoming Mandie Burns as development associate. We're proud of all the Foundation has achieved in the past 25 years, and we're excited to see what we all will accomplish together in the future.



***Celebrating 25 years of
Engaged Philanthropy***

We look forward to seeing many of our supporters and partners at the Foundation's 25th anniversary celebration on October 19, 2022 5:30 to 7pm at The Jonas A. Kilmer Mansion, Riverside Drive, Binghamton.

Look out for your invitation, and please plan to join us!



Mandie Burns

Introducing Mandie Burns

For many years we have been a staff of four. That changed this year. Please join us in welcoming Mandie Burns, the newest member of the Community Foundation team. Mandie joined the Foundation in May as our Development Associate and has been assisting us with fund development, donor relations, marketing and communications, database management and special events.

Mandie's background includes nearly two decades in real estate serving in various roles such as, administrative assistant, manager, marketing director and licensed Realtor. Mandie dedicated some time between these positions to raising her two children, and today she and her husband of 23 years are proud grandparents to two. In her free time, Mandie enjoys camping, reading, volunteering, gardening and (get this) flying drones! That's right! Mandie earned her FAA Remote Pilot License back in 2020!

Help us give Mandie a warm welcome!

Grassroots Groups Gain Essential Tools

Small organizations with close community ties can achieve great things when they have the knowledge and skills to transform ideas into effective action.

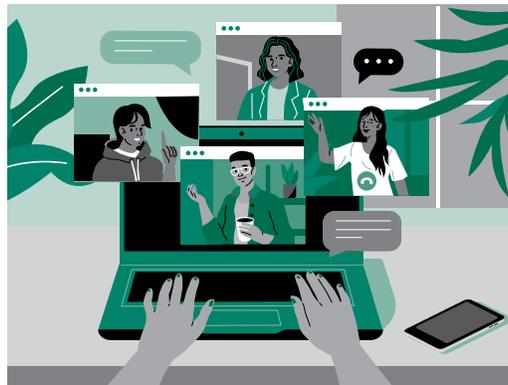
The Community Foundation and United Way of Broome County have teamed up with a New Orleans-based company called Resilia to help some of those grassroots initiatives grow stronger.

Partnering with \$12,500 from United Way of Broome County and \$12,500 from the Community Fund at the Foundation, the Community Foundation is sponsoring ten small organizations on Resilia's online Nonprofit Platform. This gives each group one year of access to one-on-one coaching, peer support, training videos, mini-classes, mentoring relationships and other capacity-building opportunities. The organizations we're supporting fall mainly into two categories: those that are led by members of the Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) community or serve that community, and small organizations in rural areas.

Groups that receive this funding have a chance to deepen their knowledge on a range of topics. "They can make one-on-one coaching appointments with content experts, and general experts in nonprofit management," said Diane Brown, the Community Foundation's executive director. "They can have coaching on budgets, grant writing, fund

raising, board development—anything that would help them improve their sustainability as an organization or their capacity to serve clients."

Besides engaging in real time with coaches, mentors or peers, participants can also gain technical support from videos, webinars and other resources that are available on Resilia's platform 24/7. "They don't have to wait for a workshop to come to their town. They can just go on line and access it," Brown said.



One of the organizations the Foundation is sponsoring is the Centers for Poverty Reduction and Support (CPRASS), which works for the socio-economic empowerment of BIPOC and low-income people in Broome, Tioga and Delaware Counties. This organization's flagship program, Sustainable Transformative Economic Progress Program (STEPP), seeks to build financial sustainability and stability for lower income residents through coaching in areas

such as personal empowerment, financial literacy and job readiness.

Volunteers in the community formed CPRASS to let community members participate directly in initiatives to address poverty, so those efforts would have a greater impact, said Nahdiya Giles, the organization's president. "We wanted to have more autonomy over the programs that we felt would be relevant to our community, to give us stability and a way to build ourselves up."

Community members' voices are valid and need to be heard, said Giles. "We need to have input in how our tax dollars are being used and

how we change our reality as people who come from lower income backgrounds."

Giles has used several resources on Resilia, including videos focused on board management and budgeting. "It's a very informative platform," she said. "It helps people understand all the different

components of a nonprofit, and what it takes to manage and grow a nonprofit."

Resilia is especially valuable for minority-led organizations, whose participants might not be tied into networks in the mainstream nonprofit world, or might not have experience in the higher-level administrative positions that provide access to helpful resources, Giles said. "It's a very good starting place to be able to understand more fully how to build your nonprofit."

Fund Stays in Tune with Community's Needs

If you want to see how philanthropy works at the most local level, you'll find a good example in the Paul G. and Miriam B. Mattern Fund.

Created in 2013 by the Matterns' children to honor their parents and continue their philanthropic legacy, the fund makes up to \$5,000 in grants each year. The aim is to support projects that enrich the cultural life and/or social well-being of residents in the village and township of Walton, where Paul and Miriam Mattern lived from 1962 until their deaths in 1982 and 1990.

This year, the Mattern Fund made three awards: \$1,000 to Cornell Cooperative Extension for ACCESS scholarships to 4-H Camp Shankitunk; \$3,000 to Music on the Delaware to help support its programs in the schools; and \$1,000 to the Walton Veterans Club for building an outdoor staircase.

"The Matterns were really hooked into the Walton community—super involved," said Tina Barber, program officer at the Community Foundation. "The family wanted a way to give back to that community, even when they didn't live there anymore."

To make sure its grants support important local needs, the Mattern Fund relies on guidance from people who are equally well connected. These are the members of the fund's grant selection panel, composed of people who live or work in Walton plus several members of the Mattern family.

"Those fund advisors include a school teacher in the Walton Central School District, a banker

at the local bank, a former librarian at the Ogden Library," said Barber. They understand how a specific grant would benefit the Walton community. They're also in a great position to spread the word about upcoming opportunities, she said. "When they hear folks talk about things they'd like to see get done, they'll say, 'Have you thought about applying to our fund?'"

For Music on the Delaware, this year's grant is the fourth, and largest, from the Mattern Fund. The organization sponsors concerts and coffeehouse performances in the historic Walton Theatre and gives students in the region a chance to work with professional musicians. The Mattern Fund awarded the group \$1,200 in 2013, \$1,000 in 2014 and \$1,000 in 2017, all to fund workshops by visiting musicians in local schools.

The 2022 grant is supporting workshops by Low Lily, a folk and Americana group; Acoustic Eidolon, a duo whose repertoire includes Celtic, folk, world and Latin music; and Amy Gallatin and the Hot Flashes, which performs country and bluegrass.

Generally, performers visit the schools on Friday and then give concerts at the Walton Theatre on Saturday night, said James Richardson, president of the board of Music on the Delaware. "We always give free tickets to all the kids who were in the school workshops," he said. In some cases, students



Walton Theatre

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— TINA BARBER

Community Foundation program officer

have appeared on stage with the performers to show what they've learned.

That's what happened when Gallatin visited Walton the first time, in 2013. She worked with the chorus at Walton High School, spending a class period teaching a song that was unfamiliar to the students, Richardson said.

"And then as many as wanted to were invited to appear on the stage on Saturday night. A big group of them came."

Support from the Mattern Fund is especially important in a rural region that is far from wealthy, said Richardson. "It's vitally necessary for any organization like ours to get some money other than through ticket sales." Local philanthropy ensures that such organizations don't have to compete with worthy programs in other geographic areas, he said. "You're competing only with Walton to meet the needs of this town."



The Community Foundation for South Central New York serves Broome, Chenango, Delaware, Otsego and Tioga counties.

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