

# Foundation

## LETTER

### SPECIAL GRANTS ADDRESS BASIC NEEDS

Over six decades, Community Foundation grants have supported some of the most visible human service programs and facilities in the region. In the second half of 2011, the Foundation also had an impact in a much more fundamental way.

Responding to the hardships created for so many area families by the difficult economy, the Foundation implemented a Basic Needs Grants Program to assist agencies whose services address the most basic of necessities: food and shelter. "To be eligible for a Basic Needs grant, agencies had to be experiencing an increase in demand and a decrease in expected funding from their regular sources," explained Jan Squadrito, senior program officer.

"In addition, we wanted to help in situations where the agency might have exhausted all other available funding before the end of the year and been forced to turn people away or reduce their traditional services. The initiative was not designed to increase or expand programs."

#### Critical Timing

The Foothills Rural Community Ministry (FRCM) is a nondenominational coalition of 14 churches in the Holland Patent area. From rented space at the First Presbyterian Church in Holland Patent, it provides a variety of services to residents of seven local townships, the food pantry being at the forefront. In 2011 the pantry provided over 70,000 meals, up



Foothills Rural Community Ministry Council Members Kelly Merrill, left, and Cheryl Edmiston check in a monthly delivery of food, purchased from the Food Bank of Central New York. Edmiston manages FRCM's food pantry and Merrill oversees its Food Sense program. Merrill understands firsthand how important the food pantry can be. As a young mother of four, she used it to help meet the nutritional needs of her children. "It was hard to make ends meet," she says, "and for us, the food pantry made a real difference."

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# ONCE AGAIN, OUR DONORS RESPOND



Peggy O'Shea, President & CEO

*"Because ... because of you, because of your commitment, The Community Foundation is building a better community."*

Simple, yet powerful, the headline that flowed throughout our 2011 annual appeal brochure captured the essence of every donor's connection to The Community Foundation.

Over 140 donors made gifts to the appeal, honoring or remembering special people in their lives, adding to a fund, or generally supporting the work of the Foundation. We are grateful and honored to recognize them here.

I again borrow from the brochure in saying, *with your generous gifts, the possibilities are endless.* Thank you!

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## SPECIAL GRANTS ADDRESS BASIC NEEDS

*Continued from page 1*

20 percent overall from the year before and 30 percent during the second half.

“For us, the timing of the grant was a miracle,” said Fred VanNamee, FRCM’s director of community relations. “The practice of our food pantry is to provide families with enough food so that each member can have three meals a day, for five days.

“We were on the verge of having to cut that back to three meals for three days. In fact, we were about to enact that reduction on a Monday, but received notification of the Basic Needs grant the preceding Thursday.

“The timing couldn’t have been more critical.”

### **BASIC NEEDS GRANTS — \$39,900 TOTAL**

#### **FOOD PANTRIES**

- \$5,400 — Foothills Rural Community Ministry (Holland Patent area)
- \$15,000 — Johnson Park Center (Utica)
- \$6,000 — Seeds of Hope Food Pantry (Utica)
- \$5,000 — Thea Bowman House (Utica)
- \$3,500 — Town of Verona Food Pantry

#### **EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE**

- \$5,000 — Catholic Charities of Herkimer County



**SIMILAR STORY** — At Seeds of Hope in Utica, the story was much the same. Bill Pfeiffer, chairman of Seeds’ steering committee, said the agency was seeing a dramatic increase in demand for its services, particularly for emergency food. Committee Members Peter Molesky, Jan Conley, Pfeiffer and Sonya Linakis ready the bread table at Seeds.

“Ordinary people can do great things when they band together — all moving in the same direction.”

CORY BOOKER

## *The Pulse* New Resource in Community Indicators Project

The Community Foundation has announced publication of *The Pulse*, a 36-page book that defines community indicators in 10 topical areas and focuses attention on the state of Herkimer and Oneida counties.

Featuring data and trends on the area’s economy, educational system and the condition of its youth and families, *The Pulse* presents a snapshot of how the region fares, pointing the way to what needs change and what can be done to build the area into a more vital region.

It was produced in conjunction with the

Leadership Alliance for a Vital Community project, in which the Foundation partnered with Mohawk Valley EDGE and United Way of the Valley and Greater Utica.

“*The Pulse* really brings this initiative to life,” said Foundation President & CEO Peggy O’Shea.

“It is a call to action to begin to effect the positive change we all seek.”

To acquire a copy, contact the Foundation or any of the Leadership Alliance partners; or find it online at [www.foundationhoc.org](http://www.foundationhoc.org) on our homepage.



## ELSA FUND HONORS NAMESAKE'S PASSION

The joy that humans and animals bring into each other's lives is magical. No one embodied or appreciated that magic more than Elsie Marie "Elsa" Fiore. From a mutt named Scamp, to felines like Pasquale and Mittens; Susie the hamster, to a baby chick, critters of all sorts were beneficiaries of her love and care throughout her lifetime.

"She always had at least one pet in the house, usually more," remembers son Paul. "People always felt comfortable giving us their animals, which for one reason or another needed a new home. Her love for animals was very personal and a part of everything she did. She was a docent at the Utica Zoo for a time, and she and my dad always supported shelters financially."

### Bringing Happiness

"One of my favorite memories is from early in our childhood," Paul continued. "Every Saturday my brothers and I had chores to do, and on those mornings my mother would let Susie out the cage to roam the house. It became a real game to find her. Usually she was in a dresser drawer. My mother had a sense that Susie needed to be free. She thought she was making Susie happy and that was her goal.

"I think the most special pet she ever had was Mittens, who died about five years ago," he added. "In the last month of my mother's life, she talked about Mittens all the time. Mittens came to us in the late 1980s, when my sister-in-law Andrea found her and brought her to my mother's house. I'm glad she did, because Mittens brought much happiness to my mother for over 17 years."



When Elsa was in the final stages of her illness, she made it known that in lieu of flowers, she wanted people to donate to local animal shelters. Her family, including husband Joseph, Paul, and other sons Joseph and Marc, along with close friend Shye Gilad, went even

further by creating the **ELSA - Ever Lasting Support of Animals Fund** at The Community Foundation. It honors her request and memory in a very meaningful way. Income from the fund will forever support animals locally, through grants to the Stevens-Swan Humane Society in Utica and Spring Farm CARES in Clinton.

The family even established a special website, [www.ELSAfund.org](http://www.ELSAfund.org), that provides a link to The Community Foundation. They wanted animal lovers to have a place to direct their donations and now they do.



## Remembering "Duke" Vicks

Everyone who had the pleasure and privilege of working with Dwight E. "Duke" Vicks, Jr., knows how he could light up a room. There was his physical stature, his warm demeanor, and his litany of professional and community achievements.

When Duke passed away in December, he left a remarkable legacy. Of the many organizations he touched with his wisdom, guidance and dedication, none was more deeply impacted than The Community Foundation.

He served on the Foundation's Board for 17 years, from 1982 until 1999, becoming its third president in 1992. Not surprisingly, under his leadership the Foundation underwent

extraordinary growth, expanded dramatically from being the Utica Foundation to The Community Foundation for all of Herkimer and Oneida counties, and implemented other strategic initiatives that began to mold the organization into its modern form.

Ultimately, he became a Director Emeritus of the Foundation and in 2010 received its highest honor, the Rosamond Childs Award for Community Philanthropy.

Duke Vicks did much more than light up a room. He was a light to The Community Foundation and all whom it serves.

Goodbye to a dear friend and community ambassador.

## MORE NEW FUNDS

### ELLEN & LOUIS GERDIN MEMORIAL FUND

A donor-advised fund established from the remaining assets of the Ellen Gerdin Charitable Remainder Unitrust, allowing the trust to be closed. The fund was recommended to the Foundation through an attorney in Rochester, because the family was originally from Little Falls, in Herkimer County. Two sisters, daughters of Ellen and Louis Gerdin, will serve as co-advisors for the fund, recommending grants primarily for the benefit of the Little Falls community.

### GABRIEL, JOSEPH & LILA MANDOUR KARAM FUND

A donor-advised fund created by the late Joseph G. Karam, through the remainder of his estate, and named for the family as a lasting legacy. The fund's earnings will benefit nonprofit organizations supporting the dramatic arts, and nonprofit organizations supporting technological development. Grants will be recommended by a committee of seven family members, in accordance with Joseph's wishes.

### ERICH K. KUPFER MEMORIAL FUND

An unrestricted fund created through a bequest from Erich Kupfer of Little Falls. After providing for special people in his life and organizations he supported during his lifetime, Mr. Kupfer left the remainder of his estate to The Community Foundation for charitable purposes. According to his cousin and executor, the Foundation received the gift from Erich Kupfer "as a reflection of his gratitude to the community that embraced him and his appreciation of the good work that your organization does." The fund has been named for him in recognition of his generosity.



Nancy Riddell, seated left, treasurer of the Oneida Chapter DAR, and Florence B. Roy, seated right, chapter regent, were joined by The Community Foundation's Elayne Johnson, director of donor services, standing left, and Peggy O'Shea, president & CEO, to mark the creation of the Oneida Chapter DAR Fund.

### ONEIDA CHAPTER DAR FUND

This agency fund has been created by the Daughters of the American Revolution, Oneida Chapter, to provide resources for their charitable work and generate a stream of income to sustain the organization. The assets came from the bequest of a dedicated local member, Phyllis Sherman Raschke. The Foundation will invest the fund's assets in its large investment pool to generate growth and will support the DAR's efforts to acquire additional planned gifts.

*We welcome all of these new funds to The Community Foundation's endowment. Donations to help them grow are welcome and appreciated. For information on creating a fund, contact Peggy O'Shea or Elayne Johnson.*

*Save the date!*

## FOUNDATION TO MARK 60TH ON JUNE 8

It began in 1952, with the vision of a small group of local leaders to create a vehicle through which philanthropically-minded individuals could support the community's welfare forever.

Over 60 years, the Foundation has grown and evolved beyond responsive grantmaker and steward of funds, to the leadership role on community issues it plays today. And many would say that The Community Foundation is just getting started.

On Friday evening, June 8, the Foundation will cap its 60th anniversary with a celebration in the Sculpture Court at Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute. It will be a time to reflect, give thanks and preview the next 60 years. Details will follow, but save the date — it will be memorable.



Dr. Charles Antzelevitch, executive director and director of research at the Masonic Medical Research Laboratory, video tapes a special message that will be shown at the 60th anniversary program on June 8. Behind the camera is filmmaker Aaron Ure. Photo by Image House Productions.

## THE SAMARITAN COUNSELING CENTER NEW HOME FOR HELPING



Divorce. It takes a toll on everyone, especially children. Most vulnerable are youngsters under 5, who struggle to understand and manage their feelings. For them, the negative consequences can multiply into difficulties like sleep, academic and behavioral problems, and unhealthy allegiances to one side of the family.

Today, helping families through such situations is one of the challenges therapists at The Samaritan Counseling Center of the Mohawk Valley face frequently. Very often, counselors at the Center are able to make a positive difference and reverse the detrimental effects on children.

“One of the most striking and robust changes we see in family counseling is when we invite both parents into the therapy room with the children and begin talking with them about how the youngsters are experiencing the co-parental negativity,” explains Gregory Kovacs, the Center’s executive director. “As the children listen and hear that someone understands them — and as they develop hope that the parents will begin to understand — we can see their behavior change.”

### Range of Services

In addition to working with families, the Center’s mental health counseling services encompass psychotherapy for individuals and couples, a parent/infant program, services for the elderly, and consultation for clergy, physicians and other professionals. Its staff of 10, which includes seven full-time therapists, provided some 6,000 hours of treatment in 2010.

### New Center of Help

Established in 1980, the Center has been doing its work from rented space at 1643 Genesee Street in Utica. That is

changing this spring as the agency moves to its own facility at 1612 Genesee Street, an undertaking helped by two grants from The Community Foundation — \$100,000 toward the purchase of the building and \$88,000 to assist with renovations. The grants will enable the agency to increase its programs and hire an additional therapist. Kovacs estimates that owning its own quarters will save the Center approximately \$15,000 yearly in rent costs.

“We’re pleased to be able to help The Samaritan Counseling Center maintain and strengthen their vital services this way,” said Mary Morse, Community Foundation Trustee and Grants Committee Co-Chair. “We saw an opportunity here to help the Center acquire their own building without a large amount of debt, thereby allowing them to devote the income from their counseling work to operating costs, and maintaining and expanding their much-needed programs.”



Greg Kovacs, executive director, checks the progress of renovations at The Samaritan Counseling Center's new home at 1612 Genesee Street in Utica.

## LITERACY LEADERSHIP ENTERS KEY PHASE

Leadership. It's no coincidence that term is appearing alongside "Community Foundation" more often than ever these days, as the Foundation continues to transform itself beyond responsive grantmaker to collaborative leader on critical community issues. One of those issues is literacy.

Another important step is underway in the effort to address the unacceptably high rate of illiteracy in the region. The Literacy Coalition of Herkimer and Oneida Counties, of which The Community Foundation is a leading partner, is progressing toward hiring an executive director who will head the coalition's activities.

"For the coalition to be effective, everyone agreed it needed an executive director," explained Foundation President & CEO Peggy O'Shea, "and we're pleased that the United Way of the Valley and Greater Utica Area, another strong partner in this



effort, has stepped up to have the director as their employee." The Community Foundation is funding the position. Major support for the project is coming from the M&T Bank/Partners Trust Bank Charitable Fund, along with additional backing from a generous donor. Grant dollars from discretionary funds round out the funding, which also supports a two-county action plan for combating illiteracy.

The latest initiative unfolded in December when the Foundation's Board of Trustees approved funding of the executive director position and two-county literacy plan.

"In addition to being a worthy goal unto itself," O'Shea added, "it's most

appropriate that improved literacy is closely associated with both economic development and education, two of the leadership areas of focus the Foundation's Board has targeted for making a positive difference."

### Chamber of Commerce Honors Foundation

While non-profit organizations don't produce profits in a conventional business sense, they are business-like in virtually every other way. Recognizing this, the Mohawk Valley Chamber of Commerce and *Mohawk Valley Business Journal* include a non-profit category in the "Business of the Year" awards they team up to present annually. For 2011, they honored The Community Foundation of Herkimer & Oneida Counties as Non-Profit Organization of the Year, among those with fewer than 50 employees. Foundation President & CEO Peggy O'Shea accepted the award during ceremonies held December 15. She is pictured with Scot Hayes, left, Mohawk Valley Chamber of Commerce board member, and Sam Berardino, III, board chairman.





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*Save the date!*

## Corporate Partners to Bring Geoffrey Canada to Utica October 17

Cory Booker inspired us to "change the world with our bare hands." Geoffrey Canada will challenge us to "save it, one child at a time."

That will be the theme of Canada's keynote address on October 17 as the 2012 presenter in The Community Foundation's Speaker Series.

President and chief executive officer of Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ), Canada has become nationally recognized for his pioneering work helping children and families, and as a passionate advocate for education reform. *The New York Times Magazine* has called Harlem Children's Zone "one of the most ambitious social experiments of our time."

In 1997 the agency launched the Harlem Children's Zone Project, targeting a specific geographic area in Central Harlem with a comprehensive range of educational, medical and social services.

Canada has been named one of "America's Best Leaders" by *U.S. News & World Report* and his work along with that of HCZ is considered to be a national model. It has been the subject of numerous features in the media, including "60 Minutes," "The Oprah Winfrey Show," "The Today Show," and *USA Today*.

**The Speaker Series is funded by the Corporate Partners Program of The Community Foundation — a collaboration of generous area businesses and The Foundation to promote nonprofit excellence and community advocacy. The 2012 Partners are: Bank of Utica, Birnie Bus Service, Carbone Auto Group, Excellus BlueCross BlueShield, Fastrac Markets, M. Griffith Investments, NBT Bank, The Observer-Dispatch, Pacemaker Steel, Staffworks and Strategic Financial Services.**

For more information about the Corporate Partners Program, please contact Elayne Johnson.

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