We’re putting your generosity to work.

Even though winter is waning, and spring will be here soon (not soon enough for some of us), The Community Foundation’s remarkable accomplishments in 2019 have not faded from view. We awarded a record $8 million in grants, more than half of that from donor-advised funds. In addition, our highest-ever tally of donations received and new funds created point to a continuing trend of community impact supported by donor generosity. You and many others who believe in our community continue to make a difference.

In this newsletter, we profile the Rising Phoenix Fund established here in 2018 to aid in recovery efforts for natural disasters nationwide, and how the fundholders stepped up to address last year’s flood recovery locally. Also, we feature ICAN, an organization committed to keeping families together.

Thanks to your commitment and dedication, donor dollars continue to enhance a resurgent community. Together, our legacy will be a brighter future for all.

Alicia Dicks
President/CEO
As Fred Rogers once said, in times of unpreventable calamity we must “look for the helpers,” as we will “always find people who are helping.” The Rising Phoenix Fund and its guiding founder, Ron Cuccaro, have proven themselves the kind of helpers “Mister Rogers” was talking about—demonstrating a remarkable commitment to those in need both nationally and locally.

The Rising Phoenix Holdings Corporation (RPHC) is the parent company of the nation’s leading disaster preparedness and recovery firms, Adjusters International and Tidal Basin Government Consulting. Based in Utica, the corporation was founded in 1985 and has focused its efforts on disaster preparedness and recovery for 35 years. In 2018, RPHC established the Rising Phoenix Fund through The Community Foundation to further aid recovery from natural disasters across the nation. And within months, RPHC was presented with a close-to-home need for the fund to address.

The Halloween 2019 storm that dumped almost seven inches of rain on Herkimer and Oneida counties caused widespread flooding. Beyond the immediate impacts—travel restrictions, road closures, power outages—the aftermath challenged many area residents, some still recovering from similar damage suffered in July 2017. Some properties in especially hard-hit neighborhoods were condemned; many others were left without heat and electricity.

“I think the best thing to do outside of measuring and documenting damage is to support people and give them the basics of what they need. They lost their homes, clothes, and some had no place to go,” said Cuccaro, executive chairman of RPHC and its former president and CEO. “There are charitable organizations out there to help, but there is so much to do. From the Halloween 2019 flooding, agencies were receiving hundreds of applications for help—something needed to be done.”

RPHC acted, announcing a $50,000 match for flood-relief donations received by The Community Foundation. The fund’s “double your donation” effort added to Oneida County’s $1 million dollar commitment to assist in community recovery.

“It was the perfect opportunity for us to do something quickly and we decided it would be good to leverage it into a match,” said Cuccaro. “It helped in recovery and getting money to people sooner to help them do what they need to do, while building awareness and showing that this cause is important in our community.”

“Where areas have been struck multiple times over the past few years, it may not be catastrophic to the point where they can’t move back in, but they may have replaced their furnace or hot water tank more than once, or needed to have their basement decontaminated multiple times—they may not have the means to get through without assistance,” said Steven Surace, RPHC president. “The professionalism and common goals that The Community Foundation has for the community are great, and it’s an organization that’s looking at the community as a whole and thinking about how they can best bring it forward.”

In 2019, the Rising Phoenix Fund also presented a $25,000 grant to Americares, a disaster relief and global health organization committed to providing emergency medical needs to people around the world. The funds provided disaster relief in the Bahamas following Hurricane Dorian—the most intense storm in the country’s history. The intention of the grant was simple: use it where it was needed the most.

“They used the funds for counseling services, which is pretty unique,” said Cuccaro. “They were able to employ 35 counselors to help children and families affected, which was an immediate need. We did not designate it for that, but that’s where it served its purpose the best.”

“A lot of the government programs are positioned to assist with property damage and relocation, but mental health is an important thing, as well,” said Surace. “There is never enough funding to..."
encompass all needs. It is a traumatic experience, with people losing everything they own and not having proper insurance to assist with recovery. It was rewarding to provide funding to address that need.”

Helping others is integral to community growth. Moreover, it can be doubly appropriate to focus on charitable organizations providing assistance that gives back to the people who support those organizations. Helping community members recover and rebuild is an all-encompassing duty. As Cuccaro says, a rising tide lifts all boats. Such is the vision of the RPHC, in partnership with government and local businesses.

“As our community grows, develops, and prospers, we must help other people who need it,” said Cuccaro. “When it comes to giving, you get back more than you could ever give.”
Our community benefits in countless ways because certain organizations dedicate their efforts to empowering individuals and families to be the best version of themselves. Optimism, opportunity, and a sense of togetherness flow through our streets, giving hope to all that they can do whatever they put their minds to. One such organization, ICAN, believes in that statement and lives it through its name and mission every day. A staple in the community that unites families, providing supportive programs and services, ICAN anchors Downtown Utica’s historic Bagg’s Square district.

Formerly known as Kids Oneida, ICAN—Integrated Community Alternatives Network—changed its name from Kids Oneida in 2019. With expanding programs serving more than just “kids,” and services provided outside of Oneida County, the organization’s name was due for a change. And it was one that came full circle, as ICAN was the organization’s name when it was established in 1997.

“More and more people are coming to us and asking for support and it’s really working. By rebranding, families are identifying and recognizing that they can access and utilize our services,” said Steven Bulger, CEO and executive director.

ICAN’s unique home and community-based network provides individualized and non-traditional social, emotional, mental health and behavioral services and care to the highest-risk individuals and families. In 23 years of service, it has grown into a 16-program entity that reaches across six counties—Herkimer, Madison, Montgomery, Oneida, Oswego, and Otsego—to provide its clients everything from prenatal to end-of-life services for a continuum of care. In addition to core programs and services it offers, ICAN also coordinates care with an Independent Practice Association comprising 45 agencies and more than 200 providers.

After years of keeping families together and producing good quality outcomes, the organization received state approval to begin expanding the work that ICAN does by partnering with other nonprofits across New York state to set up similar programs.

Kids Oneida has been replicated through programs called Kids Herkimer and Kids Otsego. The organization also provides programs to assist new parents including Evelyn’s House, a transitional living facility for new and expectant mothers, juvenile justice programs, adult and childcare management,
peer support, and nursing home transition or diversion for elderly patients are just a few of the other services offered.

“Currently, the most utilized program is our Adult Health Home Care Management, which serves about 600 families,” says Bulger. “Right now, as an agency, we keep 98% of our families together. Whether that’s babies out of foster homes, children out of residential treatment centers, adults out of psychiatric hospitalizations, the elderly population out of nursing homes, 98% of them are able to stay home.”

Across the street from ICAN’s Main Street headquarters, the Children’s Museum has served the community for decades. Over the past few years, The Community Foundation worked with ICAN and the museum, helping the two nonprofits come together under a management agreement.

“Forging innovative partnerships is in our DNA. We asked ourselves, how can we support not only other clients and the work that we do, but other organizations?” said Bulger. “The Community Foundation really helped spur that and bring us together and now the future is bright for what’s going to happen. To be in the heart of so much development that’s happening in the city is special. You can’t help but be excited to be a part of it.”

Since 2007, The Community Foundation has awarded ICAN nearly $650,000 in capacity building, competitive, and donor-advised grants. In 2019, ICAN was the winner of the Community Choice Awards Human Services category, sponsored by the Ronald and Sheila Cuccaro Family Fund, receiving $10,000 to fund the renovation of the kitchen at Evelyn’s House.

“Without the support of grants, we wouldn’t have been able to serve as many individuals as we do now. So much of what we see as our partnership with The Community Foundation is through capacity building. The partnership has allowed us to grow and connect in ways that we didn’t think we could, it’s given our organization a new perspective on how to not only benefit those that we serve, but how to better our community overall.”

ICAN’s vision is simple—to help families thrive by keeping them together. Through bold and innovative thinking, pushing the envelope with collaborative solutions, and supporting the needs of children and families, ICAN has used the building blocks it’s been given to reach new heights for the future of care in our community.
Our NEWEST funds

In 2018, The House of the Good Shepherd was awarded a $15,000 grant from the Mele Family Fund to support its Kinship Homes project. Thanks to that support, The House was able to increase the number of kinship homes from 26 to 41 in just one year. The funding was used to prepare a kinship home promptly by implementing mandatory safety measures and purchasing furniture and other necessities for children entering a home.

“The partnership with The Community Foundation, along with the funding from the Mele Family Fund, has provided an incredible resource to expedite the child placement process within their own family, known as Kinship Foster Care,” says Leila Bjornland, director of development and communication at The House of the Good Shepherd. “Our program has grown to be the second largest in the region. True leaders in our community are paving a positive path for the children and families, and The House is grateful to have this relationship and the support of our community.”

We invite you to join our Legacy Society

The Legacy Society was created to recognize those who have committed to supporting our community through a planned gift. It’s our way of acknowledging generous individuals who contribute to and share The Community Foundation’s vision of a vibrant region with opportunity for all.

Becoming a member is simple: include The Community Foundation of Herkimer & Oneida Counties as a beneficiary of a gift from your estate and notify us of your plan. We are responsible for carrying out your charitable vision, putting your legacy to work.

For more information, contact Nick Grimmer, 315.731.3737, ngrimmer@foundationhoc.org.

MEASURING OUR impact

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Our NEWEST funds

ADIRONDACK LEAGUE CLUB COMMUNITY FUND FOR EDUCATION
A donor-advised fund established by Adirondack League Club to support the educational endeavors of students in the Central Adirondack region of the Adirondack Park.

LINDA LEOGRANDE YOUTH AMBASSADOR SCHOLARSHIP FUND
A scholarship fund established by the Broadway Theater League of Utica to provide academic scholarships to the participants in its Youth Ambassador program in memory of longtime board member Linda Leogrande.

ADIRONDACK LEAGUE CLUB SCHOLARSHIP FUND
A scholarship fund established by Adirondack League Club to award scholarships to students in the Central Adirondack region of the Adirondack Park.

MICHAEL AND LOIS SILVERMAN FAMILY FUND
A donor-advised fund established by Michael and Lois Silverman for general charitable purposes.

CHRISTOPHER AND DEBORAH MCGRATH FAMILY FUND
A donor-advised fund established by Christopher and Deborah McGrath for general charitable purposes.

UTICA PUBLIC LIBRARY CHARITABLE FUND
An agency fund benefiting the Utica Public Library, a nonprofit organization with a mission to serve as a source of information for the community through various resources.

CRAZY GOOD FOUNDATION FUND
A fiscal sponsorship of Crazy Good Foundation, Inc., a nonprofit whose mission is to generate funding for essential resources and services that ensure the well-being, stability, and development of motherless children.

VOGEL FAMILY FUND
A donor-advised fund established by David and Kathryn Vogel for general charitable purposes.
INVEST IN YOUR Community

MAKE A GIFT THAT WILL FIT YOUR PHILANTHROPIC GOALS AND BENEFIT THE COMMUNITY FOR YEARS TO COME.

HOW TO GIVE

ONLINE
foundationhoc.org

MAIL
2608 Genesee Street
Utica, NY 13502

PHONE
315.735.8212

WAYS TO GIVE

MAKE A GIFT
Cash
Real Estate
Stocks & Securities

CREATE A FUND
Donor-Advised Scholarship Field-of-Interest

PLAN YOUR LEGACY
Bequests Future Fund Life Insurance

GENERATE AN INCOME
Retirement Plans Charitable Gift Annuity Charitable Remainder Trust

INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE?
CONTACT OUR TEAM >

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TRANSFER INSTRUCTIONS FOR GIFTS OF STOCK

Please provide your bank or broker with the following instructions for transfer of stock to our account at Robert W. Baird & Co. Inc.:

DTC #: 0547
Account #: 1854-6383
Account Name: The Community Foundation

Notify Nick Grimmer, director of giving strategies, 315.731.3737, ngrimmer@foundationhoc.org, that a gift is being transferred. Provide the donor name, number of shares, and the name of the stock or the stock code, as well as the designation.

A copy of our most recently filed financial report is available from the Charities Registry on the New York State Attorney General’s website (www.charitiesnys.com) or, upon request, by contacting the New York State Attorney General, Charities Bureau, 28 Liberty Street, New York, NY 10005, or The Community Foundation of Herkimer & Oneida Counties, 2608 Genesee Street, Utica, NY 13502. You also may obtain information on charitable organizations from the New York State Office of the Attorney General at www.charitiesnys.com or 212.416.8401.