Community foundations nationally have operated in much the same way for more than a century, reacting to funding requests with traditional grants. Those who founded The Community Foundation of Herkimer & Oneida Counties could not have imagined the depth of distress in our community today. Even as we celebrate the Mohawk Valley’s economic rebirth, many continue to face social divides stemming from race, ethnicity, gender and religion; they are challenged by poverty, childhood lead poisoning, diabetes, obesity and other ills.

Fortunately, our founders and generations of dedicated donors invested in our future, allowing us to address unforeseen community needs as they arise. And, after decades of grantmaking, we must adapt our way of doing business to fulfill our mission to Engage, Invest and Lead.

Here’s how we will create a vibrant region with opportunity for all:
• Listen to residents
• Tackle tough challenges
• Take action
• Put money where it matters
• Grow next-gen leaders
• Build the future—now

I invite you to learn more by visiting foundationhoc.org/newcourse.

Alicia Dicks
President/CEO
Once primarily associated only with collections of books for reading and studying, libraries have become community centers where patrons can come to make use of public computers and streaming services, borrow DVDs, ice skates or even cake pans, as well as participate in various programs and activities geared toward all different age groups.

Just off busy Route 12 in Utica sits the heart of our area’s public libraries, the Mid-York Library System. The nonprofit organization promotes and assists all 43 public libraries located in Herkimer, Oneida and Madison counties, covering nearly 3,000 square miles, from small rural areas to larger urban communities.

Mid-York and its 19 employees broaden the reach and effectiveness of each member library, centralizing key services and providing support that facilitates and enhances day-to-day operations. One example is the intralibrary lending program based out of its 30,000 square-foot headquarters that organizes the sharing and delivery of materials between libraries. Patrons can request any book or material that is available from a neighboring library and Mid-York will facilitate getting it to them in a timely fashion—“making the magic happen,” as they refer to it.

Although they all work together toward a common goal, every library in the system remains a separate entity, governed by an independent board with the ability to direct much of its own work, including choosing the type of books, programs and activities it offers to best meet the needs of the community each serves.

“Some communities prefer to read Christian fiction, others favor historic novels, it really varies,” said Wanda Bruchis, executive director of the Mid-York Library System. “The libraries know their communities so well, sometimes on a first-name basis, so that’s a really good way to detect what their needs are.”

Like many entities around the world, local libraries have embraced new digital technologies in recent years. Technology has changed the way the library system functions and the services it offers, driven largely by continual upgrades to its digital catalog system. Patrons can now access the catalog from their smartphone, computer or tablet, check their account, place holds on materials, and more. The power of the yellow Mid-York library card now goes beyond just books. The system offers a digital media service called Hoopla that allows users to borrow movies, music, audiobooks, ebooks, comics and TV shows for viewing on a variety of devices.
For more than two decades, The Community Foundation and its donors have been strong supporters of the Mid-York Library System and its member libraries across Herkimer and Oneida counties. Most recently, Mid-York received a $10,000 grant from the Mele Family Fund after winning the 2018 Community Choice Award in the Health and Wellness category. With this award, libraries have purchased yoga mats, snow shoes, fishing poles and even board games for library patrons to use in meeting their wellness goals. The libraries hope that by providing tools such as exercise equipment, cook books and even group classes that it will help their patrons live a healthier lifestyle.

The Community Foundation has also assisted both Mid-York and many of the individual libraries with renovations and technology upgrades, allowing them to serve more individuals while providing them with the latest technology to use.

“Many of these buildings are 50 years or older,” said Bruchis. “The support from The Community Foundation and its generous donors has made it possible for the libraries to apply the limited financial resources they have to materials for the patrons.”

“Our partnership with The Community Foundation is one that we are very grateful for. The assistance it provides has touched many of the libraries and collectively is helping us to fulfill our mission to improve and expand library service in these counties. We are enthusiastic about the bright future that lies ahead for our libraries.”
Utica native Sadieann (Zogby) Spear grew up in a family that was dedicated to giving back to their community. This was driven in large part by her father, Wadih Zogby, who had a passion for helping the local Lebanese community, especially those who arrived in the United States in need. Zogby immigrated from Lebanon in the early 1900s and made a life for himself as an entrepreneur, working and owning several businesses throughout the Utica area.

“My father and his family helped a lot of people as they established their businesses,” she recalled. “I always saw people come to our home that would be invited to sit for dinner, and my parents would invite them to come stay if they needed help.”

In recognition of their father’s generosity over the years, Spear and her sister, Miriam (Zogby) Balutis, established the Wadih & Juliette Zogby Family Fund in their parent’s names in 2006.

“We thought the fund would be a great way to perpetuate his ideals and generosity,” said Spear.

Hearing their father’s stories informed the sisters’ understanding of the obstacles that refugees face day to day, especially in our local community. Inspired by this, grants from the fund are often focused on organizations and programs that assist refugees and address their hardships, including the Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees and Midtown Utica Community Center. The fund also supports other causes Zogby cared strongly for, such as helping to sustain children's educational programs, through support for organizations like the The Neighborhood Center and Utica Public Library.

Spear is a firm believer in helping those in need overcome adversity. And, she says, she is grateful that she has been fortunate enough to make philanthropy a part of her life.

“Honestly, I feel very grateful every single day; and I consciously try to put that out at the forefront of my life. To be able to help other people, especially when we see a benefit, is gratifying, and I do believe people can rise above challenging circumstances.”

Spear worked for The Arc Oneida-Lewis Chapter for several years and was amazed by the individuals’ willingness to overcome hurdles when given the skills and opportunities to do so.

She also worked at The Community Foundation in the early 2000s, experiencing firsthand the value of donor-advised funds and their role in meeting the needs of local nonprofits.
“The job was very rewarding because I was able to see what we were doing in the community and what donor money was doing for the community. It was very enlightening to know about all of the different programs out there and helping the people who are suffering and truly need help.”

These days, her focus is on motivating others to explore all the great things our community has to offer, and to help when possible.

“Volunteer somewhere where you know you can make a difference. Even if it’s a small thing, every small act counts.”

Currently, 4Elements Art Studio in Utica is a big part of Spear’s life. She enjoys jewelry-making and participating in some of the studio’s art programs in her spare time. She also supports the studio’s partnership with local nonprofit organizations coordinating adult and children’s programs that use art as therapy. Spear was also an art teacher for many years, so she recognizes the impact that art can have on people’s lives.

“I love what 4Elements is doing with various agencies. It helps kids express their lives through drawings, paint, sculpture and other media in a safe space. It opens the door for them to speak their feelings.”

Spear continues to be excited—and inspired—by the community she has always called home.

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New DONOR-ADVISED fund

DR. RUSSELL AND MAXINE RIDER CHARITABLE FUND

A donor-advised fund established by Dr. Russell and Mrs. Maxine Rider for general charitable purposes.

Back by popular demand are the Community Choice Awards, with exciting new changes for 2019! We’re building on the success of last year’s public grantmaking contest, made possible through the generosity of donor-advised fundholders. This year’s contest has grown with the addition of three new funding categories, as well as a special bonus prize to be awarded by The Community Foundation’s Board of Trustees! Mark your calendars with the following dates, and stay tuned for more details.

AUGUST 15 – PUBLIC ONLINE VOTING BEGINS
SEPTEMBER 18 – PRIZE PATROL DAY
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

NEW 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.

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*PHOTO TAKEN AT THE HAGE BUILDING, A LEED GOLD CERTIFIED FACILITY IN DOWNTOWN UTICA.